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A MON AMI HILAIRE BELLOC,
UN DES RARES ANGLAIS QUI
CONNAISSENT PARIS ET LA
FRANCE, JE DÉDIE CE LIVRE

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CHARACTERS IN THIS BOOK

Henri Roi, known as Henri Quatre; Richard Haveling, the Sentimental Observer, called Mr. Paname; André Rhobert, celebrated painter; Arsène Le Duc, rédacteur of the *Moniteur Parisien*; Aristide the Goatherd; Georges Jouvence, French journalist; Tom Quickly, of the *New York Argus*; Emilie Renaud (the Dance in the Silence); M. Lepic, Prefect of Police; Count Abélard Costi de la Brière, nicknamed Bibi-la-Bohème, Prince of Thinkers; Lisa, Suzy and Paulette; Professor Pelle; the Dean; Pierrot, Colombine, Harlequin; M. Grosjean, Director of the *Moniteur Parisien*; M. Le Président De Rotor; Lord Appleberry; Mr. Oscar Kanto; M. Milgraine, Deputy; M. Rouchon, Senator; M. Hellié, Minister; Countess Marthe de Montadour; Marquis de Douilles; Fanny Fulger of the Palace; F. Medwin Fall, Editor of the *Framerang*; Dollard, a Montparnassian; Marie, a servant; Marguerite, a restaurant keeper; a concierge; the Mayor, the Herald, and the Garde-Champêtre of Montmartre; the Men of Montrouge; the Flower Woman, etc., etc.

SCENES IN THIS BOOK

The story is laid in Paris and its environs. It unfolds itself like a cinematographic film revealing the following scenes:—The Pont-Neuf with its statue of Henri Quatre and its view of the monuments of the city; Les Halles with the Flower Market; the Chat Qui Fume, an early morning café; the Boulevard Saint-Michel in the Latin Quarter; the apartment of Henri Roi in the rue de La Harpe; the Cabaret des Alchimistes; the Luxembourg Gardens with the Children's Playground, the birds and Guignol; a Jardin de Lenôtre; a political salon; a famous artist's atelier at Passy; a taxicab; the Hotel de la Montagne on the Boulevard Montparnasse; the terrace of the Café de la Coupole, the resort of painters and writers; the offices of the *Moniteur Parisien* on the Grands Boulevards; the tree-tops of Robinson; the Sweethearts' Fair; the Place Pigalle; the Butte at Montmartre with its Windmill; the Place du Tertre; the Restaurant Byzantin in the Bois de Boulogne; Chez Marguerite; the Roman Quarries and the Catacombs; a flat on the Boulevard Raspail; the streets of Paris and the Bal Bullier on July Fourteen, etc., etc.

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MR. PANAME

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CHAPTER I

HOW HAVELING MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF HENRI QUATRE

IT was as he returned from his nocturnal ramble in Les Halles that Richard Haveling had his first close-up vision of Henri Quatre. Morning after morning as he passed over the Pont Neuf he had raised his stick in grave salutation to the great French King immobile in bronze, without looking for a response to his greeting. But now there came from high over his head a cheerful call: "Salut."

The odd thing was that on this sad dawn his gesture had been more perfunctory than usual. He had accomplished the ritual of the uplifted stick often enough for it to become somewhat meaningless and mechanical.

When he had begun to write his monograph, which was, he hoped, to rival the celebrated work of Poirson, his enthusiasm for Henri Quatre had known no bounds. Poirson was all very well but he had not done full justice to the man who had achieved the unity of France, and who not only endeavoured to make each peasant prosperous and happy, but was the true forerunner of President Wilson—a King who before his time dreamt of a Supreme Council in Europe which would prevent war and would perpetuate a peace based upon Right rather than on Might. Haveling had mouthed so often the fine phrases he had written (it must be confessed they were banal enough, but banality has never yet shocked an author and seldom a reader) that he could have recited long passages on the bridge, and occasionally did. Henri Quatre had listened to them apparently unmoved. A statue makes an excellent audience in that it betrays no impatience, never yawns, never remembers suddenly a forgotten engagement, never rudely turns its back; but, on the other hand, it gives an icily cold reception even to the most

complimentary periods. Haveling had regretted this lack of human warmth. Still, Henri Quatre did not contradict him as would the examiners at the Sorbonne when he should finally muster up courage to present his thesis for the Doctorate. In this Henri Quatre showed his superior intelligence and courtesy, thus confirming the exceedingly high opinion Haveling held of him. For years now the Paris student, who unlike his fellows preserved the strictest silence about his antecedents—so that there were great arguments at the Café de la Coupole as to whether he was of English or American origin—had laboured at his academic task, until Henri Quatre was for him a real person, a companion of his wanderings by night as well as day. Henri Quatre was his Hero.

That from somewhere under the sky a voice should fall, startled him, it is true, but it did not amaze him. Had an unnoticed beggar on the stone bench broken in upon his reverie, he would have been surprised—neither more nor less than he was surprised at the Speaking Statue.

The world was not yet lit up. Behind Notre Dame the sun was sprawling with outspread elbows on the clouds, drawing itself into a sitting posture. One could just discern the grey turrets of the Palais de Justice and the needle-like spire of the Sainte Chapelle. There was a vista of bridge after bridge, dark and ghostly, linking the sleeping world of the Left Bank of the City to the earlier awakened Right Bank, where monstrous quiet horses attached to incredibly huge carts were standing stock-still while blue-bloused men with red handkerchiefs tied around their heads, unloaded carrots and asparagus and cauliflowers and piled them into colourful mountains on the pavements. There, to be sure, was the pleasing bustle of the new day. Raucous-voiced and stalwart women were giving orders and, sitting in high pulpits, were elaborately marking down the multitudinous produce of fruit and flowers and vegetables and meat and fish and poultry which was to constitute the fare of Paris on the day just beginning. There were trains hauled by crazy and loud panting engines clattering through the

streets. And there were taxi-cabs waiting in the few accessible corners for belated revellers who were paying exorbitant bills to La Mère Paisible for the unseasonable food they had consumed and the weary dances they had trailed to a doleful measure in the arms of bright-gowned but bored pensionnaires of the establishment. Over all you could positively hear the devastating blare of the glaring lights which made night unbearably brighter than noon. . . .

There, uproar and confusion and illumination. Here, where Haveling stood, silence and slumber, and the first faint saffron light in the sky. The Seine lay sluggish below, sleeping too. Black barges could be dimly discerned. A few blurred lights on the banks were blurred in the river. Immense buildings, emporia of the masses, loomed unreal as a city of phantasmagoria on the low livid clouds. . . .

He could hardly distinguish the noble, erect figure on the high-stepping horse as he looked up at Henri Quatre. But as he once more saluted in the most ceremonious manner, there was a scrambling sound and he

saw Henri Quatre half off his horse, his body bent over the neck of the beast, one leg wriggling without dignity in the air. Haveling was, to be perfectly frank, somewhat shocked. He could not conceive his King to be ungraceful, but in the half light it was apparent that this detached leg, which seemed to have an independent life, was being transported with the greatest difficulty over the animal's back. To think of the Vert Galant in that posture was not pleasant. Haveling would have helped had it been possible but the pedestal towered above him and the horse measured more hands than human legs can reach. So he stood there helpless, watching the limb frantically agitated. He observed the figure save itself from falling by clutching desperately at the upstanding ears. He saw the arms flung around the proud arched head; then there was a scramble and a quaint mortal dangled under the dilated nostrils. The lifted foreleg of the prancing steed assisted Henri Quatre considerably. He got astraddle on it and, hanging for a moment, dropped to a firm footing on the pedestal. The worst was

over. Quite how the rest of the journey was accomplished Haveling hardly knew. There was the noise of a fall and the unhappy King picked himself up ruefully, rubbed his back, dusted his knees, swore a good round French oath, which convinced Haveling that he was of flesh and blood, and then, turning to the dawn, exclaimed solemnly:

"Salut au Soleil."

Haveling remained tongue-tied.

"Bonjour, mon brave!" cried Henri Quatre. "We are happy to remark that you maintain your allegiance to our person."

"Bonjour, Mon Roi!" stammered Haveling, hardly knowing in spite of his monograph what form of greeting was suitable for an ancient King of France. He tried to collect his scattered senses and to recall how one conducted oneself on these solemn occasions. He was genuinely touched by the magnanimous condescension of a Sixteenth Century monarch who had not hesitated, heedless of the peril, to alight from his horse in the middle of a Paris bridge and in the full Twentieth Century to speak to him.

He would have been grateful, melancholy as he was, for less.

Somehow, the weirdness of the encounter did not impress him. In Paris anything was possible. He had lived in the magic city long enough to accept its chances and its changes, its wonders and its adventures, as normal. For him a gorgeous tapestry was always in process of weaving, and each successive scene, highly coloured and interesting as it might be, was not unexpected. In this he had imbibed something of the spirit of the Parisians themselves who while enjoying the most extravagant masquerades refuse to consider them as exceptional. You can do many things but you cannot astonish the Parisian; and it is precisely because he accepts without question the poetry of life that life preserves for him so much fantastic poetry. Whoever is critical of romance withers romance irremediably.

"It is pleasing to know that there still remain a faithful few," continued the King, "but how little the times have changed. We recognise, not without sardonic humour—let us see, it is now three centuries since we

formed it—that our grand design is still in fashion and is still the diplomatic theme of Europe. Do you remember just before that madman Ravaillac was so ill-advised as to assassinate us we were about to dispose once and for all of menaces to the peace of Europe. The German Protestants would have helped us then. Perhaps they will help us to-day. . . . Dear me," said Henri Quatre dreamingly, "the world stands still, after all. Leagues of Nations and Alliances with Germany are still in the air. Lord Cecil and M. Caillaux are not anachronisms now: but they would not have been anachronisms in my day. Let us hope that no Ravaillac. . . ."

Haveling caught up the thread of this historic fancy. "Everything is as it was, Your Majesty," he said; "why, even our Protestant politicians of to-day—our Millerands and our Briands, who despoiled the Church in France—like you abjure their anti-clerical creed and, declaring Paris to be worth a mass, make friends with the Pope again. Then we have our Sullys who seek to reform the finances of the country. . . ."

"And those," cried Henri Quatre, "who after the long war declared that the people should put each Sunday their poule au pot. . . ."

"That was, Mon Roi, the ambition which stirred me most when I began my monograph. A chicken in the pan for everybody, what an ideal! It is the best social gospel I ever heard of. Unfortunately, our Communists. . . ."

"Communists," repeated Henri Quatre, frowning. "Do not talk to me of them. They have muddled the idea completely. But we must not stand talking here about the politics of to-day and yesterday which resemble each other so strangely. Man is a talking animal and he has talked for three hundred years about the same subject. Alas, to what practical results has his talk led him? The morning wind is so cool and this hose is so draughty that I should be grateful if we could continue our talk—since talk we must—in a café. Nothing like a good glass of hot café crème when the dawn is breaking."

"There Your Majesty commits an an-

achronism," interrupted Haveling. "Have you forgotten that it was nearly half a century after your reign that coffee was introduced into France? How the doctors declaimed against it! We have, at any rate, that advantage over your days. If every citizen is still without his chicken, every citizen at least has his café au lait. Perhaps that is progress, perhaps that is democracy."

"The chicken will follow—of that be sure," said Henri Quatre, solemnly. "But in the meantime I am positively shivering, and anachronism or no anachronism let us have our coffee."

"There is an amusing establishment open in Les Halles that I know well if Your Majesty will permit me to lead the way," replied Haveling.

"What is it called?" questioned the King.

"It is the Chat Qui Fume," responded Haveling.

"Oh, I know the Cat Which Smokes well," exclaimed the King. "Often when I am belated and other cafés are closed do I wander over the river to take my morning roll there."

If Haveling had accepted the appearance of Henri Quatre as natural enough, he was now amazed to learn that the King was an ordinary frequenter of cafés. It was not the miracle which astonished him. It was the lack of miracle. Obviously there was nothing unreal in the monarch descending from his horse but it was painfully unreal that his new-found friend should merely be a nocturnal prowler like himself. He began to notice historical blunders in the cut of the green doublet that his companion wore. Nor was the nose a true Bourbon nose. The beard was trimmed too pointedly and the ruff on which it fell was not authentically of the epoch. He became aware that the whole attire had been taken out of some ancient wardrobe. Maybe it was a suit hired for Mi-Carême. Haveling did not realize all this without a sudden depression of spirits. Disappointment seized him like a clammy hand. Disillusionment in the dawn on the Pont Neuf is hard to bear.

Now that he thought about it, of course Henri Quatre was dead. There could be no doubt about that. Poetry had vanished

from the world, giving place to mere make-belief. All absolute monarchs were dead. They had been swept away by the frock-coated Poincarés and Coolidges, by the Lloyd Georges and Mussolinis, and there was a dust of Baldwins and Herriots and Stresemanns, and what not. He should have known from the beginning that there was no surer way of burying a man for ever than to make a statue of him. Who, then, was this comic opera personage for whom he felt a trifle of disgust? How and why had he come expressly from his pedestal where the world had elevated him out of its sight and out of its mind, to return the courteous salute of an uplifted stick? The past did not return to the present: the past lived in the present and the present was the past as it was the future and as it was all earthly time.

Haveling looked up at the horse riding the city darkly overhead. The bareheaded monarch was still perched on his eternal height dominating Paris, which was not even aware of the domination. His sceptre was held precisely as it had been held since the

sculptor first placed it there where everybody could conveniently forget it. Whatever emblematic power a sculptor gives is given for good and in the giving is destroyed. In spite of Napoleonism and Bourgeois Royalism and Republicanism and Radicalism, there, braving sun and rain, oblivious even to the disrespectful pigeons which streaked his golden head with white, was still to be seen—though seldom seen—Henri Quatre immobile in bronze, glorious in the imperishable glory of art, insignificant in the insignificance of things pushed into the lumber-room of the air above our eyes.

He stared, then, at the bearded head in the heavens, and stared at the bearded head above the parapet of the bridge, and thought of the ignoble tumble, the ignominious rubbing of haunches, which, nevertheless, left the nobility of Henri Quatre unimpaired.

"Shall we not drop the farce, Sire," said Haveling, "or rather, while keeping it up, acknowledge to each other that we are deceiving ourselves? Oh, the joy of make-belief! It is the poetry that is always ac-

cessible to us. But tell me first what has happened. I saw you tumb . . . descend from that horse but I see you still erect on your horse. Will Your Majesty deign to explain who you are and who is—" and he pointed to the statue.

The man on foot laughed. "I am known by your contemporaries in the workaday world," he said, "as Henri Roi. It is a predestined name, is it not? We shall learn to know each other better and I will tell you my humdrum business in life. But first let me express my satisfaction that there is one other person who I gather takes an interest in the heroic life and days of Henri Quatre, and that by the inevitable coincidence of a common sympathy we are drawn together. I understand that you, too, have written on the subject which interests me."

"I am still engaged on a monograph," said Haveling. "I hope to present it as a thesis at the Sorbonne."

"I have been engaged on a similar work all my life," returned M. Henri Roi. "Perhaps we can help each other. It amuses me sometimes to sit aloft with Henri Quatre."

Then his manner changed. He no longer laughed. A fanatical light shone in his eyes. "The reality is," he cried, "that I am the true Henri Quatre. The other is a poor effigy, despised even by the pigeons. We live in a dingy apartment in the rue de La Harpe. We have no courtiers and soldiers. Nobody does us reverence unless I can welcome you among my subjects. We have frequently observed your salutations but hesitated to acknowledge them. How could you understand? You were gesticulating to a dead dumb thing. Besides the police have interfered with us five times as we were climbing up. But to-night we have made acquaintance. . . ."

"At the expense of a few bruises, I am afraid."

"A few bruises! What are they compared with the horions of the forty years' war or of the four years in which we compress our modern conflicts? But, come, give your arm and we will walk side by side. You see," added Henri Roi mournfully, "we are caught up in the egalitarian current of the time, and besides it is rather lonely to have

no friends when the courtiers no longer exist."

So they went pleasantly arm in arm, Richard Haveling and Henri Roi, the decadent son of Jeanne d'Albret, over the Pont Neuf, as the sky began to crimson and the Seine began to stir, and Richard Haveling felt that, after all, adventures were possible in an adventurous world.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH THE BLEATING OF ARCADIAN GOATS IS HEARD

DAINTILY they sounded as they fell upon the sleeping city—the lilting notes of a shepherd's pipe. To be sure, there was a point of melancholy in their fluttering haste. They told a trifle sadly of high grassy hills in clear air. They fell in showers coolly like bright babbling brooks falling and turning on their way to the lower heights where little cottages were half concealed amid the trees. It was good to hear them, though they cunningly conveyed the nostalgia of windswept spaces and clean grazing ground.

Here, between the banks of big buildings, they seemed homeless and lost. A policeman who was puffing a cigarette and leaning against the doorway of a gigantic palace of glass in which were ranged pyramids of

stuffs and wax figures of men and women elegantly carrying their suitings and robes, came out of his dream to listen to the piping. He was a Basque, and the vision of the Pyrenees where he had spent his boyhood rose before him in the rue de L'Arbre Sec. On the Quai de la Mégisserie, the caged denizens of the bird fanciers' shops also heard the thin tones and awoke to add their chanting by way of chorus. Some reminiscence of liberty stirred in their little brains.

The rag pickers were unaffected. They continued to delve in the dustbins among the broken meats, the cracked vessels, the orts and ends of household waste. Occasionally they dropped some unconsidered treasure, the fruit of their fumbling, into a sack. One of them was a boy of uncertain age, incredibly small, with the peaked and wizened face of an old man. Most of these children of the night who turn over the garbage of Paris are pale and undersized. Why should they look up at the playing of pipes? They live, these chiffoniers, in the dismal zone beyond the fortifications, in dirty, tumble-down wooden huts, amidst

stench and filth, and no Arcadian fancies could be awakened in them.

But Henri Roi was a Béarnais, like the illustrious King, and Richard Haveling knew the southern country well. They stopped short, each in his own fashion enchanted. Haveling began to recall the Reverie of Poor Susan, who heard the thrush at the corner of Wood Street and immediately saw mountains ascending, trees and clouds and pastures. . . .

Then there was the bleating of goats. So far, however, the goats and the piper were invisible. The two men pursued their way, but as they came to the rue Berger, the herd came into sight. There were about a dozen of them, brown and grey and speckled, their bells jingling a pretty tune. Behind them marched a grizzled, broad-shouldered old man in a blue smock, on his head the quaint béret of his pays. In one hand he held his pipe which he fingered dexterously, blowing with contentment. In the other he carried a long baton with which now and again he brought back to the herd an errant goat.

"Tiens," cried Henri Roi, "this is a sight

for sore eyes. I thought that no more should we see such flocks in the streets of Paris."

"I had supposed, too, that they had vanished with the war," said Haveling. "But apparently Paris remains what it was—the microcosm of France. Nothing that is French but that can be found here."

"It is that which consoles one for what one has left behind," nodded Henri Roi. "What is left behind comes to greet you in the multitudinous city." The old mountaineer, an urban Strephon, halted his goats. "Would the gentlemen like a little fresh milk?" he asked. "I have a bowl for them."

"By all means," replied Haveling, and the goat-keeper, kneeling down, manipulated the dugs of one of his charges. They took the warm milk in turns, cementing their friendship by drinking from the same bowl. How good it was, drunk thus in the dawn.

"How long have you been here?" demanded Haveling.

"I was here before the war," replied the mountaineer, "but I returned to my village. It was Monsieur Rhobert who brought me

back the other day. He could not bear to see Paris abandoned by me and my fellows."

"Monsieur Rhobert, the great artist, who has engaged me too?" exclaimed Henri Roi. "That is a genial thought of his. He is full of original notions."

"Hi! La Grise! Ho! La Trompetta!" shouted the shepherd to his goats. "Au plaisir, Messieurs."

And he put the scrannel to his lips and blew a lilting air, and the bells jingled and the goats bleated as they went on their rounds. Not far did they go before a door opened and a ménagère in her peignoir with a jug in her hand appeared to purchase the warm fresh milk of the Arcadian goats. And now there was a pitter-patter of felt slippers as the breadcarrier with loaves a yard long in her pannier came cheerfully along the street. She was buxom and the country bloom had not yet left her cheeks. She rang a bell and an unseen hand released a catch. Into the open portals she disappeared, mounting from floor to floor and leaving the golden bread erect against each door.

The pipes and the goats had given the signal for a general rising. Concierges in déshabillé, their heads tied up with gaudy kerchiefs, pulled apart the portes cochères with a clatter. They rattled the dustbins over the pavements. They briskly swept with great brooms. They shook carpets with explosive effect. With all their bustle, they found time to gossip with each other, sometimes pausing in their work and leaning on their besoms.

"The concierges must be a race apart," observed Haveling. "I have never understood how they can be so wideawake and active after their interrupted slumbers. To lie in their lodge all night, to hear the bell ring as late home-comers demand admission, to reach out and pull the cord which opens the door, to note vigilantly the name which is called out so that no intruder may enter, and then to turn over again to sleep—and this perhaps a dozen times between nightfall and daybreak—it is a mystery how they preserve their good-humour and their liveliness."

Henri Roi shook his head dubiously.

"Look at them now," he said, "exchanging their secrets. We can do nothing unknown to them. They are telling each other what time their tenants came in. They are relating our matrimonial quarrels. Our good and ill fortunes are discussed. No circumstances escape them. They learn in some uncanny way from the very aspect of the letters they distribute to us what kind of news they contain. They are the eyes of Paris, the domestic police, who spy on all our doings."

"All the same, they are brave women," protested Haveling. "They are our protectors, our mothers, our servants."

As they spoke a newspaper kiosk was opening. The bonne femme was spreading and folding the early morning sheets, hot and wet and sticky from the press. Daredevil cyclists, with huge piles of papers on the handle-bar of their machines, were racing over the rough roads. The policeman had lit another cigarette and was strolling complacently by, cocking an amiable eye at the newsvendor and at the concierges. Far off the feeble note of the pipe could still be

heard, broken by the bleating of the goats and the tinkling of the bells. . . .

The company at the Chat Qui Fume was showing signs of boredom and fatigue when they entered. That is to say, the clients sitting around at the little white painted tables had sleepy eyes and a disconsolate expression. The market porters, including the amazingly strong men known as *les Forts de la Halle*, wearing their great broad-brimmed felt hats, were only casual customers who slipped in for a moment or two and stood at the zinc covered bar. They took no notice of the heterogeneous assembly of revellers, with soiled shirt-fronts and dusty smoking-jackets, of the lightly-gowned, tired women on their homeward way after a disappointing night, of the journalists who after having finished their quotidian task, were taking an onion soup. Here and there were nondescript men of sinister appearance. One of them corresponded to the conventional conception of the apache —his face slashed with an ugly scar. He was wearing corduroy trousers, a red waist sash and a peaked cloth cap pulled over his

eyes. Certainly he looked mischievous enough as he sat alone glowering in his corner. But Haveling picked out at once the party of newspaper men he knew.

"Hello, Arsène," he called, as he went up to a young man with a formidable black beard, whose dark hair brushed back fell straight to his shoulders.

Arsène Le Duc, who had recently won considerable reputation for his picturesque articles in the *Moniteur Parisien*, the most spirited of the boulevard publications, turned a shining face to the newcomers. "Hello, Mister Paname," he responded, waving a friendly hand, "come and join us. But, bless us! who is with you? Well I declare, it's Henri Roi all dressed up. Make room for Henri Quatre, you others! He is one of the heroes of my article this morning." He got up, shaking the hand of Richard Haveling, generally known in the circles he frequented as Mr. Paname, because of the peculiar acquaintance he was believed to have with many strange sides of Paris life—an acquaintance far more extensive than the majority of foreign residents, or

for that matter, French residents of the capital possessed.

"You all know Mr. Paname, I think," he said to his companions. "He would do honour to our profession. What quaint papers he could give us if he would! He goes everywhere and sees everything. Paname, my boy, you have the demon of curiosity which would render you invaluable services if you only had the itch of scribbling."

"But I do scribble," demurred Haveling. "My monograph on . . ."

"Oh, no, cut that out. We don't want to hear again about your wonderful work that is never finished," laughed Arsène. "As for you, Henri Quatre," he said, clapping the green-clad masquerader on the back, "you are doubly welcome because you have helped me to earn several louis to-night. Listen, all of you, and I will read to you my *élucubration*."

A roar of protest went up from the company. "If you read it, we will all read our pieces," declared one of them, pulling a newspaper from his pocket. The others im-

itated his example, and half-a-dozen broad sheets were flourished.

"I should like to know what you have found to say about me," intimated Henri Quatre, as he took a painted iron chair.

"And I, too," said a voice behind them.

They looked round and they saw the amazing person who had just entered. He was in evening-dress, but it was an evening-dress such as had never before been seen. The cut was irreproachable but narrow golden zigzags ran down from the shoulders to the end of the sleeves. The same patterns were repeated from the lapels. The broad expanse of shirt front was streaked with golden lines. What was most extraordinary, however, was the manner in which he had decorated his face. His hair was of a light straw colour, and a long white lock curled over his forehead. His cheeks were shaven but a ruff of whiskers surrounded his chin. The upper lip was bare, with long drooping moustachios starting from either end of the lip after the fashion seen in Chinese pictures. It was clear that the eccentricities

were calculated, for his visage expressed unusual intelligence.

"André Rhobert!" exclaimed Le Duc. "This is an unexpected visit. What brings you here?"

"I have come from the Opera Ball," he replied. "I thought I would find you. I wanted to tell you of the sensation I produced to-night. But you can judge for yourself. Look at me."

"We cannot help looking," cried the journalists together.

"But it was not only my personal appearance," continued André Rhobert. "My decorations for the ball were a wonderful success. Everybody agreed that the Opéra had never been so amusingly transformed. My dress will give you the clue. Gold was the predominant note, but I made such a mixture of Chinese and Modern and Futurist motives, as bewildered the thousands of guests who were packed as tightly as passengers in the Métro. The President of the Republic himself offered me his felicitations."

"I wish I had gone. Grosjean gets worse

every day. He wanted to tell me again about his connection with Gambetta. He has lived on the Gambetta tradition for nearly half a century," complained Arsène Le Duc. "But you can tell me all about it. In the meantime you have not seen what I have written about your other enterprises."

"Gentlemen," said André Rhobert, "shall we not for once forget the professional etiquette which forbids a writer to declaim his own masterpieces and make an exception in favour of the ebullient and vainglorious Arsène Le Duc, who is dying to inflict his prose upon us. Besides, I want to hear it, as does my friend Henri Roi."

So it was decided, and in a clear loud voice with dramatic inflections Arsène Le Duc, who had been hoisted upon the table, read to the astonishment of the market porters, the tired girls, the sleepy revellers, the nondescript men of sinister appearance, and the scarred apache, the article from the *Moniteur Parisien*.

No sooner had he begun, than there was a diversion. There trooped into the little café a band of sub-editors from the *New York*

Argus, which was near by. The *New York Argus* published a Paris edition in which American and British residents in Paris read the news from home, and in addition, learned all about each other. There were pages devoted to the tea-parties of the town, with full lists of the names of the guests. If anybody changed his address, moving from one dingy room in a dingy hotel to another dingy room in another dingy hotel, the fact was recorded in the *New York Argus*. Did a clerk in a British bank so far forget the modern manners of the town as to become formally engaged to marry, an announcement appeared in the society pages. There were reporters specially told off to write funny stories regarding the Anglo-Saxon Colony at Montmartre, and they did their job humorously, relating how a compatriot had stayed out all night.

Others scoured Montparnasse, interviewing newly arrived students on such grave subjects as Prohibition in America or Art in England. There were write-ups of all the five-franc restaurants, and as for the gatherings at the Café de la Coupole, they occupied

more space than the discussion of International Problems.

Now and again, somebody would launch a little review which was supposed to be highbrow, and such famous contributors as Ezra Ounze, Arthur Stone, Ernest Intheway, Bob MacIntosh, F. Medwin Fall, Gertrude Stoll, and the rest of the Paris luminaries contributed. The greater part of the contents of these reviews invariably found its way in the shape of extracts and appreciations into the columns of the *Argus*. Nearly every day there was a flutter in the Anglo-Saxon circles at the news of the arrival of a cinema star, or a social celebrity, or a person of whom nobody had ever heard before, for the purpose of obtaining a divorce in Paris, and the motives of these unconjugal voyagers were set forth at length.

The band of sub-editors, having successfully produced another issue filled with information of this character, came to refresh themselves at the Chat Qui Fume. They were headed by Tom Quickly, who was singing at the top of his voice a negro spiritual. Tom Quickly was a man who was admired

by all beholders, especially by feminine beholders. He had a beautiful red beard—a cataract of flame falling over his manly chest. With his fresh complexion and light blue eyes, he was really a pretty man. Moreover, he had Bolshevik leanings and aired his opinions, terrible and revolutionary, on all occasions. This gave him a prestige which was unsurpassed. Nobody could be more advanced than Tom Quickly.

During the reading of the article his voice could be heard from time to time in such snatches as—

Swing high, swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home. . . .

The others joined in softly, supplying the different parts in harmony. Not that they needed anything more than a common taxicab to carry them home.

CHAPTER III

LILIES AND ROSES ARE WRAPPED IN A NEWSPAPER

WHENEVER Richard Haveling thought of Emilie Renaud he thought of that delightful corner close to the Chat Qui Fume in which are stacked up piles of sweet-smelling flowers. If it had not been for the pleasant spectacle it is possible that he would never have encountered Emilie Renaud.

Everybody who has visited Les Halles in the early morning has watched the flower-sellers of the city making their purchases. They come with big baskets and sometimes with hand-carts which they fill with fragrant blossoms and hasten off to arrange them in their shops, on their stalls, and in their paniers. In every street you will find some primitive construction—often a mere board—which cunningly springs to life and makes

a splash of colour, a deftly composed bouquet, in the swirl of the traffic.

Every day is a saint's day and every saint's day is a fête day for a considerable proportion of French folk. Their names are taken from the calendar so that they have as it were two anniversaries in the round of the year—they have their own birthday and they have the day which is devoted to their patron-saint after whom they have been christened. It is the custom on these occasions to present flowers, as well as at Christmas, at the New Year, on the First of May when muguet the luck-bringer is in bloom, on the dreary Day of the Dead in rainy November when chrysanthemums outspread their luscious bosoms.

It is because of these customs that Paris is always redolent of flowers. Crudely chalked on a slate hung up by each flower-seller is a reminder that the day is the fête day of Saint Hilaire, of Sainte Agathe, of Saint Joachim, of Sainte Odette. Nobody is allowed to forget the daily opportunities of showing loving kindness and of embalming existence by the perpetual gift of flowers.

One could see from the café door the banks of peonies, of sweet-peas, of lilies, of carnations, of tulips, of iris, of roses, of marigolds, of lilac,—flowers of different seasons brought together from the varying climes of France, in particular from the extensive fields of the sunny South and from the hothouses of the Metropolis.

Mr. Paname had not been interested when Henri Roi had first mentioned, on the way to the café, Emilie Renaud. The reference had been so casual. But now as he looked out on the flowers there came to him the desire to buy armfuls and armfuls of bright blooms. For whom might he buy them? One can buy flowers for oneself but the joy of buying flowers is in buying them for others. He thought one by one of his acquaintances but it was not until his mind tripped up on the name of Emilie Renaud which was no more than a name for him that he decided who should be the recipient of his purchase that morning.

The long dissertation of Le Duc who was standing on the café table was wearisome.

He listened to it distractedly. Le Duc even read the headlines:

AN ARTIST WITH IDEAS

ANDRÉ RHOBERT BRINGS ARISTIDE THE GOATHERD BACK TO PARIS

CABARET OF THE ALCHEMISTS WILL BE DIRECTED BY HENRI QUATRE

The French journalist did not begin with his story. He began with a lengthy introduction which he regarded as a piece of fine writing. "Who says that fantasy is dead?" he declaimed. "Who says that poesy has vanished from the earth? Only those who have no eyes to see or ears to hear. In Paris fantasy and poesy are to be found at every street corner. And not only at Paris. They are everywhere. They are nine parts of life. The remaining part is fantasy and poesy too."

So it went on and the audience grew impatient. But presently there came a description of the artistic activities of André Rhobert. It was related how he painted portraits, how society flocked to his studio

and crowded the balls which he inspired and decorated, how he even made of the Paris walls and hoardings and of the white tunnels of the underground railway a veritable People's Picture Gallery. He was revealed as a force of nature.

"Is there much more of it?" asked Rhobert. "My modesty cannot withstand such an assault."

"For a eulogy, it is a eulogy," pronounced Haveling.

"I thought it was to be about Henri Quatre," called out Tom Quickly.

"Nobody ever deserved to be crushed under such a weight of flowers," asserted Georges Jouvence, a journalist with an enormous round face, white as marble, crowned with a fillet of hair like a laurel wreath.

"You have come to bury Cæsar in praising him," mocked Haveling with his eyes fixed on the roses.

"Gentlemen, I am really about to begin," protested Arsène, tapping for silence with his feet on the table. And he began to tell of the return of Aristide the Goatherd with his Arcadian flock to the capital. "From

the Pyrenees they arrive, pipes playing, bells tinkling, throats bleating, to call the women from their beds with little receptacles to receive the steaming fluid of the perambulating dairy. What joy! What alacrity! What bucolic zest and innocence! The housewife will recall the lines of Virgil—or was it Horace?—as she gaily escapes from the arms of Morpheus. . . ."

Unhappily, it is not my business here to record the lines of Horace—or perhaps of Virgil—which the Paris housewives repeated, according to Arsène, of one accord, for there was an outburst of tumultuous laughter as he recited them, his head thrown back, his chest expanded, his right arm thrust upwards at an angle of forty-five degrees. It was some time before it was possible to catch the thread of the article.

" . . . Rhobert it is who has brought back this once familiar figure. For that he merits our undying gratitude. But that is not all. I have now to tell—and I shall be the first to tell it—of the novel cabaret which he has conceived. Turning his back on the champagne parties of Montmartre,

with their factitious glitter, he has imagined a simple but picturesque cadre for a pleasing entertainment. In a humble apartment in the rue de la Harpe, in the Latin Quarter, lives Henri Roi, a scholar whose erudition is undoubted. He is, in fact, the greatest living authority on the period of Henri Quatre. Indeed, he is so obsessed by his studies that he occasionally assumes the rôle of the King. No Mardi-Gras or Mi-Carême procession is complete without him. He loves to dress up and misses no opportunity, and often makes one. At night he can be seen parading the streets in old-time dress, living in imagination the days over which he has pondered. There are those who suppose him to be a little cracked. . . ."

"No, no," roared Henri Roi, drawing himself up majestically and frowning regally.

"The cellar of the house which he inhabits was evidently built long before the house itself. It is undoubtedly many centuries old. Its strong arches, its crumbling pillars, are said to have formed part of the crypt of an ancient church. There is a legend that later

the cellar was the favourite resort of the alchemists. Nicholas Flamel wrote his hieroglyphics on its walls. When Paris was a hermetic centre, it was here in the very shadow of Notre Dame, that the mediæval magicians consulted each other. The cabalistic characters are still to be seen on the worn flagstones. What mystic rites may have been performed in these precincts! It is fascinating to think of the search for the Green Lion, for the mercury that would transmute lead into gold! It may be that alembics steamed, that demons were invoked, that black mass was celebrated. . . . From certain documents carefully preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, we deduce that still more nameless horrors were perpetrated in these vaults, for it is mentioned that Gilles de Rais, the handsome bluebearded companion-in-arms of Joan of Arc, who afterwards retired to his estates and sold himself entirely to the Devil, butchering with unspeakable ceremonies no fewer than eight hundred innocent children, enticed to him by a mysterious witch garbed in black gauze —that this monster had a pied-à-terre at

Paris in the vicinity of the rue de la Harpe and may well have practised his sadistic demonology in this self-same crypt."

"Never have I heard anything so long-winded," broke in Georges Jouvence. "It is easy to see you are paid by the line."

"At least there are fish at the end of my line," retorted Arsène. "But to continue. . . .

"What a place for a cabaret! André Rhobert has reconstructed the cellar. He has given it something of its former glory. He has touched up this and renovated that, until he has produced a cadre which will thrill the sumptuously gowned women and the smartly groomed men who enter the mysterious portals in search not of the elixir of life but of the elixir of amusement. And who do you suppose has been induced to be the Artistic Director of the Cabaret of the Alchemists? Who but Henri Roi, the savant, the eccentric, the modern impersonation of Henri Quatre."

It was as he read a further description of Henri Roi that the table collapsed. Strong enough to support the most imposing array of glasses, it was not strong enough to sup-

port the formidable weight of an elocutionist who gesticulated and stamped. His fall caused an extraordinary commotion. There was a crash of crockery, a noise of overturned chairs, and the café was filled with imprecations and screams and then with laughter. Arsène Le Duc sat crestfallen in a pool of vari-coloured liquid. The market porters clustered round, rubbing shoulders with the tired revellers in evening-dress, and with the lightly-gowned women. The apache thrust his slashed face into the circle. The bar-tender loudly demanded compensation. Deserting her stall, the flower-woman rushed in, followed by the motley throngs of Les Halles. It was a long time before the hubbub was subdued, but at last Arsène was helped to his feet, the bar-tender was appeased, and the café resumed its normal aspect.

"Where was I?" asked Arsène. "You must hear the end."

Notwithstanding protests he clambered in his eagerness on a chair and proceeded with his reading. There was an interminable passage in which he depicted foreign visitors

stepping from trains at the Gare du Nord or at Saint-Lazare and immediately inquiring where the Cabaret of the Alchemists was to be found. He pictured residents of Paris coming from the Champs-Elysées, from Auteuil, from the Champ de Mars. . . .

"Can't you drag in the Eiffel Tower," interrupted Georges Jouvence.

"Or throw in the Panthéon?" cried Tom Quickly.

"With a pinch of the Tuileries and a sprinkling of the Palais-Royal and a taste of the Obelisque and a dash of the Sacré-Coeur," suggested Haveling, whose eyes were still fixed on the parterre of flowers.

"And among the ingredients, don't forget Les Invalides," said another journalist. "What about the Trocadéro?" asked a confrère. There was a series of similar remarks. "Don't omit the Observatory." "Surely, you have nothing against the Madeleine?" "Please put in the Palais-Bourbon." "I insist on the introduction of the Place de la Concorde." "Why not take us on a regular Cook's Tour in a huge autocar, with a guide shouting through a megaphone?"

Decidedly, Arsène Le Duc had overdone it. He felt his failure. He skipped over a number of paragraphs and came hastily to his peroration. "Among all the exceptional features of the multitudinous programme, undoubtedly the clou will be the appearance of Emilie Renaud. Who is she? What will she do? Those are secrets which must not be divulged. But we can promise that rarely has there been seen such grace, such lightness, such beauty, such charm, such talent, as will bring the world to her feet and make of her the coqueluche of the universe."

Le Duc descended from the chair in an atmosphere of general indifference. Certainly André Rhobert, who was too clever to miss any opportunity of ingratiating himself with the Press—for his overwhelming success largely depended on the Press—shook him warmly by the hand and congratulated him. Henri Roi, who was not altogether pleased, nodded his head in the direction of Arsène and muttered something to himself. There was a clamour of conversation and a clatter of saucers, on which were marked the

prices of the consommations. Some of the clients, almost hidden behind these saucers, piled up and aslant for all the world like miniature Towers of Pisa, began to count them preparatory to paying up and going homewards. Georges Jouvence, his marble face whiter than ever, his garland of hair looking as though it had been displaced and was awry, rose and went over to Tom Quickly, who lifted his red beard into the air.

"Just another chorus before you go," said Tom. "You know enough English to sing with us." It was comical even to think of his laurel-crowned bust of Cæsar, solemn and expressionless, bursting into song, but the others helped Tom, and the café rang with the strains of—

She had a dark and rolling eye
And her hair hung down in ring-er-lets,
A nice girl, a decent girl,
But one of the rakish kind . . .

Mr. Paname—that is to say, Richard Haveling—turned to Henri Roi. "I should like to carry some flowers to Emilie Renaud.

It is a fancy of mine, and I am sure you will help me."

Henri Roi reflected. "Yes," he replied at last, "there is no harm in that. Besides, oddly enough, it happens to be her fête day, and if I were not so wretchedly poor I would take some myself."

"You must allow me to buy some for you and you shall take them. But who is Emilie Renaud?"

"She is my niece. A good girl. I had lost sight of her for a long time. It was just when André Rhobert made his proposition to me that I came across her again. My poor sister had a hard life but she brought up Emilie well. She will have her reward . . ." and Henri Roi brushed away a furtive tear.

"She is an orphan, then?" asked Mr. Paname.

"Yes, I discovered that after losing her husband, my sister made artificial flowers—a miserable business. She managed to pay for some dancing lessons for Emilie. She is wonderful, and when I saw her, I at once proposed to Rhobert that she should make her début at the Cabaret. May I be forgiven

if I am wrong! I am terribly anxious. Perhaps it is no place for a young girl. But she must live and I cannot provide for her. She is a good girl, I tell you—and what is she to do? I hardly know how she manages now."

"Perhaps better days are coming," said Haveling, touched by these confidences. "In the meantime, we will substitute real flowers for the artificial flowers."

"I trust you. You shall come round to the rue de la Harpe this afternoon at three o'clock. You shall see her rehearsing. But you must do as I tell you. You must not enter until I give you permission. Otherwise she would be frightened. I don't know how she will face the public, for she cannot bear to be watched at her rehearsals."

"She will soon get over her timidity," assured Haveling. "It would seem that everything has been done to make a star of her before anybody has seen her. That is how stars are made to-day," he added, ironically. "Maybe if they were seen first they would not become stars. I do not mean that for Emilie. But come, let us go and load ourselves with flowers."

Handshakes. A multiplicity of farewells. An exchange of badinage. It is an interminable affair to escape from the Chat Qui Fume. but at last they found themselves among the sweet-smelling flowers. There was hardly room to walk among the peonies, the sweet-peas, the carnations, the tulips, the iris. What a wealth of colour—of delicate pinks, of flaunting scarlets, of mauve, of blue, of gleaming yellow. They swam in a sea of rich hues and were bathed in an ocean of overpowering perfumes. So busy were the dealers with the swarm of professional purchasers that it was not easy for Haveling to obtain what he wanted. Presently, however, they had made their choice of tall pale gold-tinted lilies and of ruddy roses. The flowers were obligingly made up into bouquets, wrapped around with newspapers.

"Well I declare," cried Haveling. "Here is Arsène's article. How quickly it has become waste paper! But he is fortunate in that it is used to such pleasant purpose as to enclose lilies and roses."

As they emerged, they came into the full blast of the morning movement. Crowded

tramcars were clanging, swift vehicles were bumping over the cobbles of the old paved roads; workers were hurrying over the bridges to their offices and their work-shops; some of them were still staggering from sleep; others, especially the trimly-clad girl workers, were as merry as the twittering sparrows. Down the wide steps of the entrance to the Métro they poured, a never-ceasing stream of humanity, disappearing underground. Paris was wide awake. . . .

And then, over the bridge came Aristide the Goatherd, returning from his round, no longer blowing his pipe, his little flock tired-footed.

CHAPTER IV

A STAR DANCED. . .

THE Latin Quarter was in an uproar that day. As the students swept down the Boulevard Saint-Michel some of the more timid bourgeois sitting sunning themselves on the pavement fled for shelter. In this they were wrong. Your students mean no harm to anybody. They were simply indulging their high spirits. Down the street they marched in a monôme. Young men and girls mingled indiscriminately, their outspread hands placed on the shoulders of the manifestant in front. It was a long continuous human chain. The leader held a banner aloft. It had been newly painted by an art pupil. No attempt had been made at distinction—it was sufficient that there was rudely traced in grotesque caricature the scared head of Professor Pelle, with the knife of the guillotine about to fall. Professor

Pelle was not popular. The students believed, rightly or wrongly, that he owed his appointment to political influence. "Neither politics nor police in the university" was the slogan scrawled on the banner.

Two days before the students had barricaded themselves in the amphitheatre at the Sorbonne and had refused to admit the unwelcome Professor, who had been brought up from Poitiers to lecture them. The Dean had shown, perhaps improperly, his sympathy with them and had declined the assistance of the police. The precincts of the University were, he contended, sacred. It was, of course, very deplorable that the students should express their personal dislikes—and equally deplorable that they should embarrass the Dean by loudly proclaiming their liking for him. But there was no disorder. Everything had passed off happily. Unfortunately, when they emerged into the quiet square by the Café d'Harcourt, which for many generations had been their headquarters, there had been a collision with the police and heads were broken. It was no fault of the Prefect of Police. M. Lepic, the

Prefect, when he had heard of the trouble, had personally appeared in the Quarter. When passions were at their height and a free fight had begun that might have developed seriously, this active, eager little man, with grey, pointed beard and keen eyes, sprang from nowhere. With an agility beyond his years, he had climbed on the roof of a taxicab, frock-coated, tall-hatted. With an emphatic signal to the police he had stayed a hundred batons which were about to fall.

"Mes enfants," he cried, addressing the students, "it is too hot to exert yourselves so unnecessarily. Let us save up the battle for a rainy day."

A cheer was raised and good-humour was restored. "Vive le Préfet!" went up from thousands of throats. The students surged around the taxicab. They went wild with delight. They were ready to do anything for the man in authority who knew how to handle them aright. Undoubtedly his tact averted the ugliest of bagarres. His flashing eyes were suddenly suffused with kindliness and emotion. He, too, recalled—it was

now over forty years ago—how he had participated in such students' riots. Could any spirited young man do otherwise? Not a Minister in the Cabinet but had run amuck down the Boul' Mich' in his time. But while Ministers, puffed with ephemeral importance, could forget and be harsh, the Prefect had preserved a juvenility which not even the official embroidered dress and the plumed chapeau of ceremonious occasions could altogether overlay. Unremitting in his pursuit of the evil-doer, he kept a special tenderness for the youth of the Quarter in which his own jeunesse had been passed. He really looked upon them as his children.

To-day the students from the Faculties of Law, Science, Letters, and Medicine, together with the pupils from the Académie des Beaux Arts, were proceeding joyously to the house of the Dean. There were many monômes. They were converging from several points on the rue des Écoles. They meant to make the Dean appear on his balcony to be acclaimed. Those who thronged the Boulevard Saint-Michel had for the most part added a note of gaiety to their ap-

parel. They had put on immense coloured ties. They had streamers to their velvet caps. They had turned their coats or donned their blouses d'atelier.

To the tune of Lampions they were singing at the top of their voices verses which cheerfully conveyed their implacable hostility to Professor Pelle. Now and again they roared unanimously: "A bas Pelle! Hoo! Hoo!"

Mr. Paname was finishing his lunch in the open air—for Paris is essentially an out-of-doors city, and the Parisian loves the restaurant on the pavement—when the students came into sight.

"Would you mind if I sat just behind you? I should like to hide myself behind your broad shoulders."

Mr. Paname looked round, smiling his consent. The speaker had a big brimmed cap pulled over his eyes and was holding his chin in his left hand, thus concealing the lower part of his face.

But Mr. Paname knew the voice. He had been presented to M. Lepic and had met him on a number of occasions at functions he had

attended. His recognition showed in his manner. M. Lepic twinkled and held out his hand. "I did not observe that it was you, Mr. Haveling," he said, "or perhaps I should call you Mr. Paname, like everybody else."

"You are well informed, even to the nickname of a humble foreigner like myself, Monsieur le Préfet."

"It is my business," smiled M. Lepic.

"But details of such unimportance. . . ."

"It is the details that most matter in my profession," returned the Prefect.

"I daresay you have a bulky dossier about me," said Haveling; "but what astonishes me is that you should remember what is in it."

M. Lepic looked fierce. "The Government begins to hint at my age, but my memory was never better. Memory is the great test. You were born in 1890. Your father was in the Consular Service and left you a little competence. I could tell you the amount if you wished. Since the age of twenty you have lived, on and off, in Paris. During the war you were wounded and discharged from the army in 1917. If I am not

mistaken, you have still a scar on the right side where the bullet came out. At one time you were marked down as a défaitiste because you read *La Vérité*, *Le Bonnet Rouge*, and *L'Humanité*, every day. All this is recorded against you, but it is also recorded that, doubtless owing to your father's connections, you have close relations with a number of important deputies and are on good terms with two Ministers. You are preparing a thesis for the Sorbonne. Frequently you wander about at night, and there are few haunts of Paris which you have not visited. It was the *Moniteur Parisien* which first dubbed you Mr. Paname. It was—let me see—I think it was Arsène Le Duc who wrote the article. You see, you are almost a public celebrity. Why, therefore, should I not have a small acquaintance with your history?"

"But, good gracious, how can you know what newspapers I read?"

M. Lepic chuckled: "I have my police everywhere. They are the most unlikely persons. The men you meet at the café, the keeper of the kiosk, the vendors of pea-nuts,

who have nothing to do but observe as they carry their baskets from café to café, the peddlers of oriental carpets, who hawk bright wares on their shoulders, and never seem to sell them—why, they all are glad to make occasional reports. Very unreliable they are, to be sure, and they need constant checking. The waiters. . . ."

"This is terrifying," exclaimed Mr. Paname.

"Not at all. That is to say, for those who have nothing to conceal. But here comes the monôme."

"Conspuez Pelle! Conspuez!" bawled the students. They made much noise, but they were perfectly good-humoured. M. Lepic, crouching behind Haveling, seemed well pleased. "It will pass off happily enough today," he remarked. "I shall not be needed."

The procession had gone by. He rose and pushed back his cap. As if by magic, there came bearing down upon him from different angles at the same moment three of Haveling's companions of that morning. There was Georges Jouvence, of the grave white mask; there was the black-bearded, ir-

repressible Arsène Le Duc; there was Tom Quickly, his blue eyes dancing, his red whiskers in battle formation. Simultaneously they had spotted the idol of the Paris crowd.

"Journalists!" cried the Prefect, with a brusque gesture. "Journalists are the plague of my existence. Always journalists! I have nothing to say to you, gentlemen."

Georges Jouvence lifted his hat politely, disclosing the garland of hair. "At least you will allow us to write that once more, like Haroun al Raschid, in the *Thousand and One Nights*, you went abroad among your people."

"Do what you like," answered M. Lepic irascibly. "I do not curry popularity. I do not want your advertisement. I do my duty."

"And we must do ours," announced Le Duc. "Won't you tell us that, in your opinion, the perturbation of the Latin Quarter has subsided."

"There never was any perturbation. The Latin Quarter is calm, as it always is."

"That is all we need," intimated Tom

Quickly, in his bad French. "We thank you, Monsieur le Préfet."

"A thousand devils! Will you leave me alone!" and the Prefect marched off, angrily.

The three journalists also marched off, Quickly singing as they went towards the Pont Saint Michel:

A-roving, a-roving,
Since roving's been my ru-i-n,
I'll go no more a-roving
With you, fair maid!

When Mr. Paname made his way to the rue de La Harpe, the commotion of the Quarter was still intense. The rue, ordinarily quiet, was now animated. It was filled with rather slatternly women engaged in lively conversations. Haveling had difficulty in finding the concierge of the old house, unpainted, rather dirty. She had left her little lodge and was discussing the events of recent days with a commère. But eventually he obtained the necessary directions, and entering through a low archway, came into a spacious courtyard, in the centre of which was an ancient disused well. The stairs were ill-

lighted, the banisters broken. Stumbling, Haveling managed to reach the fourth floor. It was a pitiful palace that Henri Roi inhabited. A large wooden bed filled up most of the space. There was a tiny washstand, a wardrobe whose glass doors were shattered, a miniature table, a chair, and a small strip of dusty carpet. The flowers, laid out on the table, struck a note of purity. Henri Roi was waiting for him, dressed in the absurd costume of the night before.

"I was afraid you would be late," commented Henri Quatre. "It is true that I am fallen greatly," he added, with a sad smile, as he noticed Haveling's eyes ranging round the room. "It is a poor place for one with monarchical pretensions, is it not? But at least it is my kingdom, and here I am sovereign. The man who does not feel a consciousness of his power in his own home, who does not reign over four square yards of domain, lacks greatness. . . . Of course, they worry me for my rent."

"But if the Cabaret succeeds, as it doubtless will, you will be provided for," ventured Haveling.

"I have the greatest doubts about the Cabaret. Will it give me leisure to pursue my studies? I would not give up my studies for anything. I try to enter into the spirit of the time. I try to imagine myself in the place of Henri Quatre. You will confess it is not easy in these surroundings."

"The more reason why you should change them and not live in poverty."

"I suppose I must," sighed Henri Roi. "But I hate to be paraded like a buffoon. My masquerade means something to me. That it should merely serve to amuse snobs, is bitter. I shall have to dress up, not for myself, but for the public. Let me tell you, in confidence, that I detest André Rhobert with his propositions that I cannot refuse."

Haveling began to see that there was a pathetic side to the whimsicality of Henri Roi. Sometimes the man seemed to be entirely crazy. At others he appeared to be conscious of his madness and directed it with method. Then, again, it was obvious that the commercialisation of his fancy was repugnant to him. While Haveling was endeavouring to discriminate between fact and

fiction, folly and shrewdness, sincerity and make-belief that was at last being turned to profitable purposes, Henri Roi suddenly remembered that it was nearly three o'clock and hurried Haveling downstairs.

Down they went, four long flights of stairs, and then lower still, over slippery steps. They were in the cellar, which André Rhobert planned to transform into the fashionable Cabaret des Alchimistes. The work was well advanced. Electricity had been installed, but the bulbs were veiled, and the vaults were in semi-darkness. Here and there a fuller glow was designed to throw deeper shadows of the heavy pillars on the ground. It was like the chiaroscuro of a Rembrandt picture. Stone tables and grey, inconspicuous chairs were placed around. There were corners in complete darkness. A battered statue had been erected in a niche. White rats had been introduced and occasionally peeped out of their holes. Weird signs were painted everywhere. Gargoyles, ugly and broken, stared at them from all sides. There was a startling image of an evil spirit, done in red on the wall. A space

in the centre was railed off, and a pentacle consisting of superimposed triangles pointing in opposite directions, had been traced on the ground with numbers of an occult significance. The Couronne des Mages had been drawn around it with four zodiacal figures and strange inscriptions. It was not very correct, but it helped to create an atmosphere, which Rhobert counted upon to produce a new thrill. Indeed, the whole idea of the Cabaret, though the minimum of ostentatious devices had been employed, was in reality cunningly conceived and dexterously executed.

A light footfall sounded on the stairs. Henri Roi grew excited. He put the flowers which they had brought on one of the tables and pushed Haveling into a recess where he would be totally hidden.

"Stay there," he commanded. "On no account must you show yourself. That was understood between us when I consented to your coming. She would never forgive me. Stay there and you will see wonderful things. But make no motion, make no noise."

It was with reluctance that Mr. Paname

allowed himself to be thrust in the pitch blackness of this retreat. The condition, however, had been accepted and he had no option. Then he gasped as the vision of the extraordinary beauty of Emilie swam before him. He, on his side, in dense darkness; she, on her side, standing in the soft, subdued light amid the grim emblems in the antique crypt, which acted as a foil to set off her graceful fragility. . . . Emilie was, to use the most hackneyed of descriptions which happens to be peculiarly appropriate, truly fairy-like. Her face was fair beyond comparison. The features were delicately chiselled and dainty as Delft china. She was perhaps a thought too pale, but her eyes shone, large and limpid, in the white visage. Her hair was of the palest gold. Haveling felt that he had lost his heart at the very sight of her. He understood that Rhobert should have chosen her as the vedette of the establishment. Whether she were talented or not, he did not of course know; but though he did not doubt that she was, talent seemed superfluous. Exquisite as she was in any circumstances, the environ-

ment brought out and intensified her charm. Rhobert had divined the impression she would produce unerringly. Nobody could deny his authentic artistic sense. Perhaps in the whole world there was no other girl who was so unmistakably demanded by the milieu, and Richard did not doubt the marvellous effect she would produce.

She greeted her uncle in a low, melodious voice, and Richard thought he had never heard anything so musical before. It was like the tinkling of fairy bells far off, and it set a-tinkling in his mind faint fairy bells in echo.

Her uncle, in his grotesque green clothes, came forward and helped her with unwonted tenderness to divest herself of the long black cloak she wore. She now appeared in a diaphanous robe of white, clinging closely to the slim body. Haveling's wonderment grew. He was in a daze. The whole scene was unreal and, indeed, there was much in the sequence of events since that magical moment when he had lifted his stick to the statue on the Pont-Neuf that had the quality and texture of a dream. Believing, as he

did, in the eternal poetry, the perpetual miracle of things which to many folk who lack discernment are irremediably prosaic, he yet was aware of an unaccustomed glamour which had fallen on the world less than twelve hours ago. Was this glamour retrospective, or had it existed from the dim dawn on the Pont-Neuf? He was inclined to think that the glamour of the girl had thrown back a glamour to the minute when Henri Quatre came out of the sky. In any case, the transfiguration had begun then and had now reached its climax. . . .

"These flowers are for you," said Henri Roi. "It is your fête day."

"But how have you managed to buy them? I hope you have not . . . ."

She meditated, her eyes were moistened at the idea of her uncle's goodness, his self-denial; for who more than she was aware of his poverty? Impulsively she flung her arms about him and kissed him.

Henri Roi, deeply touched, was bound to protest. "Partly they come from an unknown admirer," he said.

Her face clouded. "Not from André Rho-

bert?" she questioned, and there was a note of anxiety that stabbed and yet delighted Richard.

Her uncle shook his head. She was clearly relieved. Richard was happy, he hardly knew why.

"I assure you it is possible for you to accept them," declared Henri Roi. She took up the lilies and the roses in her arms and buried her face in them. Richard's pleasure was at its highest pitch.

"But, come, you must practise your dances," she was reminded.

Henri Roi switched on more light and there was revealed a little daïs on which stood an imposing throne. A magnificent cloth, on which was worked the fleur-de-lys, hung over it. The King sat himself with great dignity upon the throne. So serious did he look that Haveling could not suppose it was all pretence.

She took up her position before him and began to move rhythmically with unimaginable lightness.

A star danced. . . .

CHAPTER V

AUX PETITS DES OISEAUX

THE Count Abélard Costi de la Brière was feeding the birds in the Luxembourg Gardens. That was the occupation he had chosen when, thirty years ago, he renounced one by one the professions suggested by his parents. He might have entered the diplomatic service had he chosen to pass his examinations. For a time he seemed interested in science, and there were hopes raised that in science would he make his career. The law he abandoned very quickly. He announced that he meant to be an actor, and with his rich voice, which resembled that of Mounet-Sully, he might well have succeeded on the stage. Even now he frequently declaimed in the garden to the delight of the girls and the young men who surrounded him. The attempt to induce him to enter politics totally failed, though he was fond of

expressing in sonorous speeches his opinion of the events and persons of the day. The truth is that he was too fond of nocturnal discussions.

All who have long known the Latin Quarter will remember the heroic bouts at the Vachette and at the Procope between Verlaine and Abélard. Even Jean Moréas, intolerant as he was of contradiction on the rules of versification, was often shouted down by the Count. That was in the good old days before his Bohemianism brought him to absolute poverty and his family gave up the struggle to save him. He had entered the Latin Quarter, a young student who studied only as he pleased, and he was still, more than thirty years later, in the Latin Quarter and in the student stage. He preferred to sleep, strange as it may sound, in doorways and on benches in the open air rather than in the room of an hotel for which his brother had paid for many years. Such funds as he had came from occasional pursuits, such as the writing of sonnets on behalf of students to their lady-loves. His time was chiefly spent in the gardens in that alley from the

Odéon Theatre to the Place Medicis, which constitutes the principal promenade of the younger generation of students, who go backwards and forwards with measured steps, engaged in animated conversations for hours; or on the equally traditional parading ground of the Boulevard Saint-Michel on the eastern pavement between the rue de Sommerard and the rue Gay-Lussac. Nobody knows why these particular limits should have been placed on the daily—and on the nightly—march of the students, but they observed some unwritten law as they went up and down between specified points.

The appearance of the Count Abélard Costi de la Brière, now usually called Bibi-la-Bohème, was picturesque. He wore a battered silk hat, brown rather than black, shaped like a sugar-loaf, with a narrow brim. His trousers were of blue velvet, and they had been patched with the most incongruous pieces of stuff, including red flannel at the knees. Under a long-tail coat, which had survived the drums and tramplings of many generations, he had a yellow sweater. Under his arm was a worn-out leather servi-

ette, stuffed with books and papers. Invariably there was a faded flower in his buttonhole. But in spite of this strange accoutrement, there was something of fallen majesty in his demeanour. The irreparable outrages of time were to be discerned in his face—deep lines and puffed eyes—yet he carried himself erect and looked even more than his six feet of dignity. He had a fine Roman nose, a high forehead, and moustache and beard which he kept somehow carefully trimmed in the manner of Napoleon III.

There are other bird charmers at Paris, but none of them has such a way with the birds as Bibi-la-Bohème. Not a day does he miss, and the tiny creatures know precisely his hour. He has never been known to keep any other appointment, but he would scorn to be late for his rendezvous on the terrace of the Luxembourg Gardens. Neither he nor his feathered friends have need of clocks. They come together by some instinct at the exact moment.

Who supposes that the Paris sparrows have no personality? It may be that you and I are unable to distinguish between one

and the other. But Bibi-la-Bohème, a dissipated St. Francis of Assisi, calls them by their names, and they answer him. He does not, of course, know them all—newcomers are always joining the throng. Nevertheless, his acquaintance is extensive. He talks to them in his profound bass voice and they gaily reply. They tell each other the latest jokes, for there is nothing which the merry brown beings relish so much as humour. They play pranks together. Sometimes they nip him slyly, as they are perched on his hand. Sometimes he withdraws comically a big crumb as a bird is about to take it in its beak. Sometimes he pretends to be angry and claps his hands, but they are far too cunning to be frightened, and they simply cock their heads satirically. They preen themselves on the narrow brim of his hat. They flutter prettily in the air, their wings outspread, trying to maintain themselves in the same position. Naturally, they do this for fun, since they could feed just as well on the bread which is scattered on the ground. They love to catch the morsels as they are launched. Great fat pigeons also strut

around and crash through the trees, but they are rather disinterested spectators and have never established really intimate relations with Bibi.

As usual, the Count Abélard Costi de la Brière was accompanied by his youthful admirers. They formed a veritable cortège. Among them we must specially note, the trio of inseparable companions, Suzy, Paulette, and Lisa. Lisa, the oldest of them, was not more than twenty, while Paulette, the youngest, was barely eighteen. Lisa was the tall blonde, with a somewhat serious expression. Paulette was the laughing brunette. Suzy was the plump rousse with a freckled face. Do not ask me for their history. As well demand the history of the sparrows. They came from nowhere; they were just a part of Paris. What do they do? How do they live? Ask rather what the sparrows do and how they live! Most of the sparrows which came at the call of Bibi-la-Bohème belonged to the Luxembourg Gardens. They never wandered further afield. There was their home. Suzy, Lisa and Paulette also belonged to the Luxembourg Gardens.

They rarely wandered outside the Quarter. There was their home. They were artists' models, figurantes for the cinema, occasionally they were employed in a modiste's shop. They were everything by turns and nothing long.

Recently their friendship had been cemented by a circumstance which at first threatened to destroy it. Arsène Le Duc had encountered Lisa and had paid her court. Lisa insisted on the presence of her copines and Arsène, in legitimate defence, had found himself obliged to bring with him Georges Jouvence and Tom Quickly. The solemn Jouvence had attached himself to Suzy, the plump rousse, while Quickly had found a pleasant companion in Paulette.

Naturally, Le Duc, Jouvence, and Quickly, who had not always been friendly and, indeed, were even now often in antagonism, were drawn into each other's company by this triple idyll.

Suzy, while idly watching the feeding of the birds, was telling the tale of her quarrel with Georges Jouvence.

"It was not my fault," she protested.

"Figure to yourselves that he positively refused to give me a second helping of strawberries and cream."

"This is very annoying," said Lisa. "It means that I shall have to give up Arsène."

"And that I must dismiss Tom," pouted Paulette. "I don't want to dismiss him. I like Tom. Why do you do such foolish things?"

"I do not see the reason for a wholesale slaughter of the innocents," argued Suzy. "Just because I have quarrelled with Georges, you propose to quarrel with Arsène and with Tom. It is absurd."

"You know perfectly well it is not absurd," declared Lisa, gravely. "Stupid as you are, we cannot leave you alone. So there is nothing for it but to send our admirers packing. I confess it is distasteful to me."

"Besides," corroborated Paulette, tapping with her foot angrily, "I don't suppose Arsène and Tom will care to desert Georges."

"That is nonsense," replied Suzy. "Neither of them really likes Georges. He is mean and spiteful, and I think he is simply

ugly. Whoever saw such a big white face before? And he is old, too. Look at his bald head."

"Oh, if you begin to pick faults, we can all do the same," exclaimed Paulette. "Fancy a man with a red beard! And the awful accent Tom has! At first it was funny, but now I am ashamed of him."

"And Arsène is conceited, and is always talking of himself," was the verdict of Lisa. "To be sure, he is amusing, but he is far too dark. Why, sometimes he is mistaken for a Martiniquais."

"It is all very well," said Suzy, "to run down your lovers like that, but you know quite well, both of you, that Tom is good-hearted and kind; and what amusing songs he is always singing."

"So that is the trouble," cried Paulette, "that is why you have fallen out with Georges. It is because you want Tom."

"Not a bit of it," retorted Suzy. "I am only being fair to him, which is more than you are. As for Arsène, Lisa cannot deny that he is really clever. She ought to be

proud of him instead of criticising him behind his back."

"I don't care about his cleverness," challenged Lisa. "I think you are very nasty not to appreciate the solid qualities of Georges. He is not as young as the others, perhaps, but he is serious, and he has his fixed position in life. I hate to hear you talk against him."

"I am not talking against him," asserted Suzy. "But at dinner last night he pulled a long face when I chose strawberries for dessert. 'They are rather dear,' he said. I took no notice and ordered some Crème d'Isigny besides. You cannot eat strawberries without cream. I could see he did not like it, and to teach him a lesson, when I had eaten them, I asked for more. Do you know that he was absolutely brutal. He began to explain that people could not afford to have strawberries and cream twice. That meant, he reckoned, four desserts for me—as if you can count the cream separately! I got up and left him, angrily, and I have not seen him since. Do you think he will come with the others to the Luxembourg to-day?"

"Georges was right," proclaimed Lisa. "You are only a greedy little thing. The idea of calling for strawberries and cream twice. I would never do that."

"Nor I," said Paulette. "He is not too well off, and if he were, that would be no reason for such extravagance."

"Then you both turn against me?" asked Suzy, with an expression of dismay.

Paulette could not affect displeasure long. She burst out laughing and kissed Suzy—such a little bird's peck of a kiss.

"We are not turning against you," Lisa assured her; "but you should not exaggerate. For the sake of your foolish appetite you break up an association which is not disagreeable for six of us."

"You are not going to pretend," said Suzy, "that I am breaking six hearts."

"There you go, exaggerating again," answered Paulette. "For my part, I should not like to abandon Tom, but, on the other hand, I don't want to desert you."

"There is only one course to take," pronounced Lisa. "If he comes, you must make it up with him."

"I shall not make it up," affirmed Suzy.

The Count Abélard Costi de la Brière, otherwise known as Bibi-la-Bohème, turned upon the three girls a disapproving countenance. "You talk louder and louder," he rebuked them. "Cannot you hold your chattering tongues? You are frightening away my sparrows. Do you not observe that they cannot bear to be beaten in their twittering? They like to think themselves the supreme conversationalists of all God's creation. It is a mad ambition, for three little Paris girls can gabble away more noisily and more quickly than a hundred sparrows. They can utter more folly in five minutes than the sparrows in five days. They can be more mischievous, more frivolous, more quarrelsome, more garrulous, than the whole troop of Luxembourg birds. So the birds are giving up the unequal struggle. I issue to you a formal invitation to be silent."

Suzy spoke out fierily.

"Our affairs are of more importance than the affairs of your birds."

Lisa answered mildly: "But we are not

quarrelling; we are really discussing a most important subject."

Paulette laughed: "Your sparrows twitter to be fed; surely you will not deny us the right of twittering about our food."

Behind them, from under the trees, stepped out Arsène and Tom, and covered the eyes of Lisa and Paulette with their hands.

"Guess who it is," they cried, as the girls twisted and wriggled in an effort to break free.

"Arsène!" guessed Lisa.

"Tom!" guessed Paulette.

"You are both wrong," said Arsène, as he released Paulette. "Do not talk any more about the instinct of blind love," jested Tom, as he let go of Lisa.

"You see it only suffices that one should change one's choice," philosophised Arsène, as he sat down by Lisa, "for you to be equally content. Tom or myself—it is all the same to you."

"But how was I to know that you were trying to deceive us?" asked Lisa.

"Precisely," returned Tom. "You did not know. Oh, Paulette! What is the good

of saying that I am different to you from any one else? Arsène has only to cover your eyes and you take him for me. A fig for the fiction that the touch of love is unmistakable. Is there, then, no aura, no emanation, to which affection is sensitive? Are the hands of Arsène identical with mine?"

"Does the touch of Tom mean as much to you as my own?" questioned Arsène. "Oh, fickle womanhood, devoid of all the finer sensibilities! You have blasted my poetic beliefs. You have revealed to me the stern reality."

Suzy sat disconsolate, alone. Georges had not come, after all. She began to feel very sorry for herself. She regretted having insisted on the strawberries and cream—and a second helping, too! The sun shone dazzlingly on the white figures of the Queens of France, standing in a long row under the green trees, but in her heart it began to rain. The pillars of the terrace, gleaming white against the palms in boxes and the gorgeous flower beds, were blurred. She dimly saw the white sails of the boats which were thrust out by boys from the stone sides of the

tiny pond, flashing on the sunlit water, but the fountain in the centre sending up its jet, which was scattered into spray, seemed to her a symbol. A fountain of tears welled up in her and she began to cry softly.

Lisa and Paulette, happy as they were, could not look on unmoved.

"We will have to go," sighed Paulette. "It is impossible to leave Suzy alone." Her grave face grew graver.

Tom Quickly laughed so uproariously that the sparrows were scared, and it took all the persuasiveness of which Bibi-la-Bohème was capable to bring the intimidated creatures back.

"Is it because of Georges?" asked Arsène. "Why, Georges is waiting there, as sad as Suzy."

There, indeed, Georges stood, fingering his hat nervously, his prematurely bald head exposed to the sun's rays.

"I am not sad," asserted Suzy bravely, "and I will not see him, even if he comes."

Again Tom exploded in mirth, and the birds fled once more, pausing in their flight ten yards away to regard him inquisitively.

"Don't remain stock-still like an idiot," he shouted to Georges, who advanced timorously. Suzy looked resolutely in the opposite direction, but as Georges approached, she turned her head suddenly and—who knows how the accident happened?—there, in broad daylight, on this public terrace peopled by birds and students, the lips of Georges and Suzy met.

"I have an idea," declared Tom, at last, after the party had passed some merry moments. "It is so rare that we must not lose it. Not since my far-off boyhood days have I seen a Punch and Judy show. Shall we not all go and watch a performance? We incommode Bibi and the birds."

So they trooped along to the Children's Playground. The donkeys were patiently going their rounds, with half-frightened, half-delighted children on their backs, and proud mothers walking by their side; while the babies were strapped in tiny carriages drawn by goats. The miniature merry-go-rounds were circling to a wheezy music. The roundabout was a menagerie of painted

wooden cows, horses, giraffes, camels, elephants and lions.

The Punch and Judy show was in a ramshackle shed. It was one of the few entertainments of the kind now left in Paris. An audience of little folk had already collected and was sitting expectantly on the narrow benches. Their mothers and their nurses knitted away as though great things depended on the speedy completion of their work. There was much bantering as the six companions took their places at the back of the shed. The curtain was rung up and Guignol and his friend Gnafron, the principal personages of the Eighteenth Century French pupazzi made their appearance. How their antics were applauded! What irresistible dialogue! There were never such jokes as those emitted in a squeaky voice by the hidden manipulator of the puppets. The old showman was not tired of his forty years' repetition of the same quips. How zealously did he ply the baton! Everybody on the stage, including the gendarme, was beaten black and blue. One would have thought that no doll could have survived such be-

labouring, but when the juvenile audience was falling off the benches with amusement, the voice of the old showman, directly addressing the children, demanded whether there should not be still more beatings. The response was unanimous and affirmative. It appeared that the children would never have their fill of beatings, but all good things come to an end and the beatings presently ceased and the curtain was rung down on the eternal farce. . . .

"And now let us dine," suggested Arsène.

"You shall have your strawberries and cream—as much as you please," promised Georges.

The Count Abélard Costi de la Brière was still feeding his sparrows on the terrace. Tom Quickly could not be restrained from declaiming, to the astonishment of the older frequenters of the Luxembourg, the pleasant verses:

Aux petits des oiseaux
Il donne la pâture
Et sa bonté s'étend
Sur toute la Nature. . . .

"Look!" exclaimed Arsène, "there, if I am not mistaken, goes Mr. Paname!"

"Who is with him?" demanded Paulette.

"It is Emilie Renaud," answered Lisa.

It was true. A new topic of conversation had been furnished them for the rest of the evening.

CHAPTER VI

DRUMS ARE HEARD BUT ARE UNHEEDED

WE have had too many theories about Art. Anybody is in our age at liberty to fashion his own æsthetic doctrines. Protestantism in Literature, Free-thinking in Painting, Anarchy in Music, have been pushed to excess. The most incompetent person is encouraged to disregard Authority. The more incompetent he is the more he is likely to disregard Authority. Such disregard is belauded as Originality. It is, of course, merely lack of knowledge and skill. All the new-fangled notions in painting, writing, and music, are to be found in Rembrandt, Shakespeare and Beethoven; but they are judiciously executed by the Masters; they fit into their rightful place. A sense of proportion is preserved. The part —and a small part it may be—is never made greater than the whole.

It is disagreeable, therefore, to expound the theory of dancing which Emilie had evolved. There is some danger that she will be mistaken for a little-minded theorist of whom there are plenty and to spare. Happily, the reader knows that she is a practitioner whose perfection has been acknowledged by the critics—and, what is far better, by the public—of two continents. Not long ago she was unknown. At the time of this story she had not yet appeared before an audience. Now her fame has been blazoned abroad, and it is universally recognized that although the Dance in the Silence is only one of many kinds of dancing, it is an extremely important kind that had been unduly neglected. She has never claimed to have originated Silent Dancing. She modestly states that she has revived it.

The Dance in the Silence is so impressive that it is no wonder Haveling was enraptured. The Dance had become the handmaid of Music. It had no independent life of its own. The dancer, speaking generally, obeyed the wand of the chef d'orchestre or followed the movement of the violinist's

bow. The onlooker listened rather than watched. He may indeed have been captivated by the sight but he was also bewitched by the sound. Without the sound he would have found the sight flat and unprofitable. The dancer was the interpreter of the composer, like the pianist or the trombone player.

Why not enfranchise the Dance? This was the question that Emilie, a born dancer if ever there was one, asked herself. Little did she dream that an opportunity would be given to her to demonstrate that there is no need of music in dancing, any more than there is need of music to accompany poetry. The dance, like the poem, may contain its own music. Moreover, it is, when the shackles of music are shaken off, free to develop an altogether different quality of its own.

Therefore, as Richard looked on, he was watching the evolution of a neglected art. There was no music, heard or unheard; that is to say, Emilie in dancing did not evoke any musical conception, known or unknown. She had got rid, not only of the actual presence of musicians, but also of the beats which

are, as it were, the skeletor of music. The dance had become a pure abstraction. It lived for its own sake. It had no relation to anything outside itself. In it was no reminiscence, no subordination. The silence in which she danced was first a literal silence, and then an emotional and intellectual silence. No tune sang itself softly in the mind of Richard as she went to and fro before the throne on which Henri Roi sat, rigid and enraptured. The technique of the dance was, of course, the old technique, though to it Emilie had added a good deal. She twisted and turned and pirouetted with unimaginable dexterity, unexampled deftness. She moved backwards and forwards with little sweeps to the right and with graceful flourishes to the left, her lithe limbs flashing under the flimsy material of her dress, her golden head nodding like a flower on its stalk, her face alive with beauty. It was not only her body which danced, but her arms and her very fingers, which moved with expression. Torse, limbs, eyes, lips—everything was in motion.

When she had finished, Henri Roi gave

way to his enthusiasm. "It is splendid," he exclaimed. "You grow better every day. Truly, you are an enchantress, a vision of joy. You bring sunshine, and wine, and wealth, to me."

She smiled her thanks faintly, exhausted by the effort, for there was in her dancing not only physical movement, but an intensity of what we may call meaning, though no word corresponds to the exteriorisation of the soul which she achieved. Impossible to translate into another medium the essence of her dance, as it is impossible to translate an odour into music or music into painting or colour into poetry.

She began again to dance, a dance of fathomless felicity, a dance that brought the blood to Haveling's face. No need now to be told he must remain silent. He held his breath lest his breathing should be heard. He gazed as in a trance while she swayed and bent and flitted from place to place, sparkling like a wavelet, darting like a lizard's tongue, flowing like a stream, lightly poised like a summer cloud, the image of all things fair and fresh. She nodded like a field of daffo-

dils, rippled like wheat swept by a wind. She became for Richard a delirium of delight, the primal ecstasy of pleasure, the poem of life, the song of the soul. She was etherealised. She no longer existed as a palable thing. She was a vibrating light, a shining presence. . . .

She stopped suddenly, her face flushed, and then grew paler than before. She panted.

"What is the matter, Emilie?" asked Henri Roi, alarmed.

"Nothing," she answered. "A momentary défaillance. Would you like me to dance again?"

"Dance," said her uncle. "Dance always. It is prodigious. It is amazing. It is the lyric in being. It is all the arts in one and more than all the arts."

She danced, slowly this time, gravely, grandly, and if any indication may be given of the dance, she conveyed to Richard the high impression of stately romance—something of noble adventure and faithful purpose, of love that endures and achieves and sorrows. Sometimes there were fierce purple

passages and again pure pensive thoughts and divine meditation. The legend showed happiness dwindling to a wan grief and wan grief swelling to serenity. Gallant hardihood refused to succumb to the implacable persistence of innumerable adversaries. Hope and faith were the intertwined crimson threads on which were strung splendid episodes—love fighting life, and love fighting death, and love almost overborne but emerging beyond life, beyond death, in the placid triumph of eternity. . . .

She seemed to swoon, falling slowly to the ground. She tried to rise, but fell again. The watcher on the throne leaped down with a cry. The watcher in the alcove forgot his promise and rushed to her. He knelt and tried to lift her, the golden hair streaming over him. Her eyes were closed and she was as white as the lilies which in falling she had swept to the floor so that they lay strewn around her.

For a moment Henri Roi was overwhelmed by her collapse. He stood staring stupidly at Haveling and at the girl, offering no help, proferring no advice. He was petrified,

in an attitude of dazed despair. As for Haveling, he did not know what to do next. He looked around: there was no place on which to deposit the inanimate body. Instinctively he felt that she must be taken out of the weird Cabaret. But where?

"We must carry her to your room," he said at last to Henri Roi. And then he thought of the dismal room, with its wooden bed over which was spread the coarse-patterned, gaudily-flowered counterpane. Henri Roi looked at him wildly. He felt the need of blaming somebody for the calamity. He passed from dumb indolence to passionate scolding.

"You! It is you who have done this," he screamed. "Why did you startle her? It is because you were there that it has happened. Did I not warn you not to appear. If you have killed her. . . .

"It is you, you, you."

His eyes blazed like torches. His agitation was pitiful to see.

"Be quiet," commanded Haveling sternly. "This is no time for recriminations."

Henri Roi's mood changed. "Forgive

me," he pleaded. "It was not you, it was I who made her dance when she was already exhausted, already overwrought, already tottering. I am an imbecile and a brute. Am I capable of nothing good? Why did I listen to Rhobert? I have compelled her to dance to her death. I am an idiot, a wretch, a murderer."

"Silence," insisted Haveling.

"Yes, I will be silent. But you must save her. You shall always be my friend. Only save her."

His agony was heartrending and yet nauseating. At that moment Richard was filled with contempt for Roi. But there was no time to waste. "Give me her cloak," he snapped. Roi tremblingly obeyed, and spreading the cloak over the white robe, Haveling took up Emilie in his arms and carried her to the stairs. He did not feel the weight as he mounted from flight to flight. She came to her senses as she was placed upon the bed and water sprinkled on her face. Roi knelt by her side, kissing her fingers, murmuring self-reproaches, begging forgiveness in quiet, chastened tone.

As consciousness was restored, she glanced from her uncle to Richard Haveling with surprise, but there was no hint of annoyance.

"Shall I go?" asked Richard. Roi did not reply. Richard, undecided, turned inquiringly to Emilie. She did not respond, but he did not gather that his presence was unwelcome.

"You are better now, Emilie?" asked her uncle tenderly. "You were overwrought."

"It will soon pass off," she replied. "It was only a silly fit of fatigue."

"This is Richard Haveling, Mr. Paname," announced Roi, who was anxious to make amends for his unwarrantable behaviour. "He was very kind and helped to bring you here. I do not know what I should have done without his assistance."

Richard bowed.

"I am grateful to you," declared Emilie, softly. "You see the strain has been great. I have practised so much and I am looking forward with such eagerness to my début."

She did not appear to wonder how he came to be there. "It is altogether comprehensible," remarked Richard. "The excitement

of this preparation must be devastating. But you will soon have your reward."

"Do you think so?" she asked eagerly.

"I am certain," he assured her. "How could the public resist such dancing as yours?"

"You have seen me, then?" she questioned. But there was not a shade of resentment in her voice.

"Yes," he confessed. "You must pardon me."

"There is nothing to pardon," she returned. "But I am so pleased to have your good opinion. We shall be able to earn so much now. Poor uncle!" she went on, smilingly; "he has been so miserable. Fancy, there have been many days when he has had nothing to eat . . . . "

"And you," interrupted Haveling, as a thought broke in upon his pleasure.

"Oh, for myself, I need so little, and besides, M. Rhobert would make advances, if it were necessary. But why am I telling you this?"

"I hope you do not regret your confidence."

"No, no. But you see what it means for my uncle. You are a friend of his, are you not? He is so good."

Henry Roi beamed at this praise. "Perhaps we should leave you for a moment," he said, "while you put yourself to rights. But we will remain at the door and you must call if you want us."

There was only the single narrow room, and the two men went out on to the landing. Haveling, as soon as they were outside, put his hand on Roi's shoulder. "I am going to get some food," he said. "I will be back in a minute."

Roi did not say him nay, and he took the stairs four steps at a time. In the rue de La Harpe the ménagères were still gossiping, and as he turned into the quaint old rue de la Huchette he saw that the Boulevard was agog with students. M. Lepic was drinking a coffee at the corner on the Place Saint-Michel, and waved a jubilant hand at Richard as he hurriedly went by. There was a shop whose windows were filled with golden jellies, in which birds were embedded like flies in amber. There were rich pâtés and

pink smoked salmon and green barrels of olives. Richard had soon made his choice and hastened back, his hands encumbered, his pockets bulging with ruddy bottles of Bordeaux.

Roi was waiting patiently on the landing. "Take these things from me," said Haveling.

There could be no denial. Richard tapped on the door. "May we come in?" he called out.

How delicious was the response: "Entrez."

Emilie was slightly flushed and a little confused. Her uncle spread the comestibles on the table. "It is time we made a meal," he proclaimed, with forced gaiety. Emilie suspected the truth, but beyond glancing gratefully at Haveling, made no comment. There were some moments of pleasant bustle. A white cloth was found, plates and glasses appeared, and presently they all three sat down to a repast which Haveling believed to be the most charming repast he had ever enjoyed.

They spoke little, each absorbed in re-

flection. Richard was happy to be of service, and to be admitted into the intimacy of the girl and her uncle. Roi was no less happy by way of reaction to his fears. Emilie was happy, she hardly knew why. Was it on account of the assurances of Richard that success was certain? Or was there some sympathetic chord immediately awakened by this stranger?

"You have known my uncle for a long time?" she asked.

"I met him for the first time last night," Richard told her.

Roi had gone to the wardrobe for a fresh supply of plates.

"How was it he allowed you to come to see me dance?"

"I suppose," he whispered, "it was because I flattered his—his foible."

Emilie was disturbed. "You must not make fun of it," she returned. "If you only knew how kind he has been. He has suffered too. Life is so hard. His studies have never brought him either fame or fortune—nothing but disappointment. Nobody seems interested, and it is easy to understand how

he shut himself up more and more in the epoch he imagined, and imprisoned himself in the character of Henri Quatre. But he is clever and learned and brave. . . ."

"What plot are you hatching, my children?" broke in Henri Roi. "Ah, if only Henri Quatre could have had his way, what a fine world it would have been. No more wars, no more poverty. If I had my way. . . ." He did not complete his sentence.

"I scarcely dare propose it," said Richard, "but I think it would be advisable for you to take a walk in the fresh air. If you cared to go as far as the Luxembourg I would like to accompany you."

"It is on my way home," replied Emilie, ambiguously. She looked consultingly at her uncle.

"Of course you will let Monsieur see you home," cried Roi. "Monsieur will always be the bienvenu. My door is open to him."

"If you see no objection?" queried Emilie.

"But there can be none," asserted Roi. "Monsieur is a true gentleman."

So it was that Lisa and Arsène and Suzy and Georges and Paulette and Tom saw passing under the trees, by the circle of the Queens of France, Emilie and Richard, and had much matter for conversation at their dinner that evening. With the Count Abélard Costi de la Brière, who was giving his last crumb to the sparrows, Richard exchanged greetings. But Emilie and Richard did not stop. They went down from the terrace, past the donkeys and the goats drawing the children's carriages, past the merry-go-rounds, with their wooden menagerie, past the old showman's Guignol shed, and sat in a quiet alley. The chairwoman discovered them there and presented herself with a bunch of pale green tickets of which Richard bought two at twenty centimes each. Thus they purchased the right to remain on their hired chairs until the hour of closing, and to enjoy the blue-and-white sky and the green-and-white gardens, and the fragrant air, and the slowly descending peace of sunset. Surely this was enough for their forty centimes. How cheaply the chairwoman sold her wonderful wares!

They had not purchased the right to remain beyond the hour of closing. Why, then, did they abuse the limited permission implied in the pale green tickets? They had no such intention. Nor were they engrossed in an abstract debate. Indeed, they talked intermittently. They spoke with long intervals between, and their conversation would offer no especial interest, were it recorded here. But, somehow, the time slipped by, and the air was so delightfully cool, and the sky took on such lovely tints, and they dreamed such sweet dreams that they did not heed the warning drums.

It is impossible to dispute that the drums were beaten that evening, as they are beaten every evening in the Luxembourg Gardens. Richard and Emilie would be the first to acknowledge that they had no excuse. Afterwards they perfectly recollected that they had seen as well as heard the drums. In the very alley in which they were sitting, the guardian in uniform came on his round, his drum suspended from his neck, beating it stirringly. He was followed, as he is always followed, by a horde of children, marching

in irregular lines, following the drum, following the drum, as they would have followed it wherever it had led them.

Rat-a-plan! Rat-a-plan! So sounded the drum. Rat-a-plan! Rat-a-plan!

The sound died away in the distance, but Richard and Emilie still sat on the chairs, for the use of which they had paid eight sous. They had certainly heard the drums, but they had heard the drums unconsciously. Rat-a-plan! Rat-a-plan!

They had heard the drums, but they had not heeded the drums.

Rat-a-plan! Clang! Clang! The heavy gates of the Luxembourg Gardens closed upon them and the sun was smothered up in a final blaze of scarlet glory.

CHAPTER VII

A LESSON OF LOVE IN A PARK

THE white robes and the white face of Pierrot had a tinge of blue in the moonlight as he approached the little arbour in which Columbine was concealed. The attention of Richard and Emilie was called to him when there was plaintively raised a voice in the traditional appeal:

Au Clair de la Lune—
Mon Ami Pierrot—
Prête-moi ta plume
Pour écrire un mot;
Ma chandelle est morte,
Je n'ai plus de feu;
Ouvre-moi ta porte
Pour l'amour de Dieu!

The moon hung in the sky over the spire of a church, looking, as Musset wrote, like

the dot on an i. The atmosphere of the park was of a bluey white. There could be dimly discerned the bronze dolphins of a fountain which threw up a slender silvery spear. Half hidden under the dark umbrageous chestnut trees were marble nymphs. Dwarf yews, clipped in triangles and squares, ran in a straight alley to a round pond. Behind, the gables of a house rose above the foliage. A melancholy air, soft and slow, sounded from unseen instruments. Immense blue shadows lay along the ground.

The picture was charming enough in itself to seduce Emilie and Richard, who had come upon it unexpectedly. But the low strains of music and the plaintive voice of the singer and the apparition of Pierrot in this garden of Lenôtre impressed them to silence. They stood looking at each other, Richard with his finger on his lip. He had plucked a rose which grew against the wall over which they had climbed, and Emilie held the rose in her hand.

Then from the arbour emerged Colombine, laughing in the moonlight, her flower-like face upturned. The pantomime which fol-

lowed was an old-fashioned lesson of love in a park. Pierrot knelt on the grass, his hands joined imploringly. Colombine coquettishly turned away. Pierrot rose and endeavoured to embrace her. She repulsed him and fled. Pierrot picked up his guitar and touched the strings beseechingly. Colombine returned to listen, enraptured. This time she did not evade him. The timid sentimentalist summoned up his courage and kissed her. Again she pirouetted and was gone. Pierrot sat down on a stone, disconsolate. His powdered face seemed to grow whiter in the moonshine. His ample white robes spread out as he flung his arms in a gesture of despair. It appeared long before he once more took up his guitar. Colombine came back enchanted to listen to the doleful tune. This time she tried to console him, sitting by his side. The story had ended happily. . . .

The story had ended happily, but stories end only to begin afresh and happiness is attained only to evaporate. In the centre of the grassy space Harlequin, a multicoloured serpent in this moonlit Eden, danced shim-

meringly. From top to toe he was dressed in a tight-fitting skin of red, black, green, blue, white, yellow, and the multitudinous spangles gleamed golden as he gyrated. How could a timid sentimentalist in white with a guitar thinly strung hope to succeed in the contest for the heart of the fickle Colombine against this gorgeous figure of the adventurer, gay, audacious, bright? The insouciance of Harlequin was in strong contrast with the sadness of Pierrot. His vivid apparel put to shame the poor vesture of Pierrot. His enterprise had in it a quality which pleased Colombine.

The glittering gambols of Harlequin having drawn the eyes of Colombine, he had nothing more to do than approach her with bounding strides and snatch her from the arms of his helpless rival. Colombine made no demur. She allowed herself to be whisked away and under the tearful gaze of Pierrot she danced a lively measure on the green sward, the moon looking down indifferently as she was crushed against the shining, serpent-like breast of Harlequin.

Poor Pierrot! What was there left for

him but his guitar and his sorrow? He could not fight the ravisher of his happiness. He could only play a mournful air as they disappeared under the trees. Then he, too, disappeared. The lesson of love was over and a bitter lesson it had been for him. . . .

When Emilie and Richard realised that the drums, which were the signal of departure, had been heard but not heeded, and that they were locked alone in the great gardens, they were distressed. Emilie looked reproachfully at Richard. It was dreadful, she told him, to be placed in such a situation. What could they do? There was no way of escape without being observed. It was unthinkable that they should go to the tall iron railings of the park and cry to the passers-by for help. Would they not become a public laughing-stock? Was it not certain that their misfortune would be reported in the journals, where nothing that was picturesque or scandalous was permitted to pass unrecorded? Had Emilie been the unknown person of a few days ago, it would have been bad enough, but now that the newspapers were beginning to hail her as the new vedette

of Paris, she would acquire a reputation the very thought of which appalled her. She already suffered the overwhelming mockery of the mocking Parisian. Never would she live down such a contretemps at the outset of her career. Always would she be regarded as the heroine of a compromising adventure and nobody would believe her protestation that she was the innocent victim of an untoward accident. From the point of view of réclame, the incident might serve her in good stead, but this aspect of the case did not even occur to her. She was, then, greatly troubled as she saw fastened irretrievably upon her a character which belonged to many of her sisters of the stage. She thought, too, of her uncle, who had entrusted her to the care of Richard. What would he suppose? She thought, too, of André Rhobert, the gay Harlequin of Paris, who had captivated the crowd, who had captivated society, and who had endeavoured to captivate Emilie. She was well aware of his intentions, and in their special relations was only able to resist him without rupture by preserving altogether intact and unsullied her fair fame. She had

meant to live devoted only to her art. If it was impossible to stop the tongue of tittle-tattle, at least tittle-tattle should have nothing, as she intended, to feed upon. The breath of suspicion should pass lightly by, and nodding heads and knowing looks should be discouraged by the total absence of the smallest episode which could give them real significance.

Shall it be confessed, too, that she thought of Richard. She had known him such a short time and she knew so little of him. But she knew that he was kind and was to be trusted, and there was about him and in the circumstances of their meeting something indefinable which already endeared him to her. She was afraid lest their acquaintance should be misconstrued by anybody, but she was still more afraid lest it should be misconstrued by Richard. Unpleasant as the consequences might be in other respects, unpleasant as it might be to be regarded lightly by the public, unpleasant as it might be to explain to her uncle, whom she loved as he loved her, unpleasant as might be the complications were Rhobert to be emboldened

by jealousy, it was vastly more unpleasant to her at that moment to be misunderstood by Richard. Was it her fault that they had sat dreaming vaguely in the quiet alley after the emotions of the afternoon and had not been roused from their reverie by the rattle of the drum, as the uniformed guardian with his escort of children had marched noisily by? Richard could not suppose it was her fault. She was aware it was not her fault. And yet she could not fail to indulge in self-reproaches.

Her self-reproaches were soon more acute than her reproaches of Richard. For she was conscious that he was no more to blame than she was. Not for a second did she imagine that he had of set purpose kept her in the park, or had deliberately neglected to warn her of the warning drum. As they continued to sit, both silent and embarrassed on the painted chairs, their eyes downcast, there came to her presently a thought that almost consoled her. After all, this could not possibly have happened with anybody other than Richard. Her mind could not have wandered so far away, she could not have been

thus immersed in her fancies, had her companion been less sympathetic than Richard. There was nobody in the whole world, at any rate nobody whom she had ever met, with whom she could have remained, forgetful of the hours, entranced in the delight of the present, as with Richard. It was something to have found this unique companion. Perhaps she should not regret the inconvenience of the situation, since it revealed to her, if only in a glimpse, a possibility of happiness which had not hitherto been revealed to her. . . . She caught herself dwelling on this consolatory speculation and glanced up at Richard, blushingly.

He on his side was drowned in remorse. A Sentimental Observer of life, life had always unfolded itself before him as a panorama which interested him immensely, a cinematograph screen at which he was never tired of looking, but which was merely a spectacle, a play, an eternal masquerade in which he was not a participant, remote, amusing, infinitely varied, palpitatingly unexpected, richly crammed with exciting incident and originality of character, a drama

constructed by the supreme Dramaturge, Whose resources are without end, and Who makes not two blades of grass alike. Richard had looked on life, then, as though it had been prepared for him alone, as though he and perhaps the Dramaturge were the only audience. The others were the actors; he was not. He had no other rôle than that of the Sentimental Observer, which was, properly speaking, no rôle at all. Nor did he want to strut on the proscenium; he was content not to be the protagonist.

And now he was aware that he was not the onlooker but the actor. He had been lifted by a gigantic hand on to the stage and he had to speak his part. Had his companion been any other than Emilie he would have continued to regard the comedy with appreciation. But with Emilie he felt himself dragged to the thither side of the footlights. He was painfully surprised at the transformation. The Dramaturge, insatiable, was making use of him. As if there were not sufficient puppets in existence! Why should he have been snatched from the dark recesses of the pit to the limelit boards?

Why should he have been thrust into the very centre of the action?

When once he became conscious that the sequel was no longer a matter of indifference to him, that while from the point of view of his entertainment one dénouement had always been no better and no worse than another dénouement, but now from the point of view of his own fate was of the highest consequence, he set himself resolutely to his new task. First, he begged Emilie somewhat falteringly to forgive his clumsiness in landing her in such an impossible imbroglio. To which Emilie responded with a winning smile.

"We must not scold each other or think unkind things," she said. "But if we can, we must get out without anyone knowing."

"And if we cannot," he asked. "I mean, if we should be obliged to make the best of it and pass the warm night out of doors, will anyone be the wiser?"

Emilie had not considered that. It did not strike her as an impertinent question; it was certainly not meant impertinently.

"Perhaps not," she acknowledged. "I

am living in a little hotel at Montparnasse. After all, I have no account to render to anyone. If it should happen—as I hope it will not—that I should enter in the morning, the porter will assuredly make no comment. Porters do not talk. They take the comings and goings of the lodgers as a matter of course. Besides, I suppose I could change my hotel if the worst comes to the worst. But, nevertheless, I trust you will think of something. It would be hard for us to meet again if we were shut up here together, and it would. . . ."

"It would be harder for us not to meet again," ventured Richard. "Emilie, I should despise myself were I to take the smallest advantage of the circumstances to say anything to you that you would not care to hear and that accordingly would make our forced association more difficult. But I cherish the hope that it will make our forced association easier if I tell you that in all honesty and sincerity I. . . ." He could not bring his tongue to say the word he wanted to say, and to substitute a word in a lower key would, he felt, be dishonest and insincere. He paused awk-

wardly. He saw that she was not vexed. She hesitated, and then replied with a frankness which rejoiced him though it was a refusal.

"It does make it easier that you have said as much. But it might make it harder were you to say more. We know each other so slightly."

"That," said Richard, "is scarcely true. In point of time our acquaintance is slight, but I am sure it has ripened fast—may I say on both sides?"

"Yes," was her response. "But we will have other opportunities of talking about it and it would be nicer, would it not, to wait for them?"

"At least," retorted Richard, "let us treat each other as old friends. Let us have confidence in each other. Let me call you Emilie and do you call me Richard."

How could Richard play the part of Harlequin, unused to participation in the drama as he was? He approximated rather to the rôle of Pierrot. In this he was right. Delicacy forbade any further progress.

"It is better to leave it at that," answered

Emilie. "Let us be real friends—Richard."

That was all, but it was sufficient. Their understanding was perfect. There are those who will think it too much, who will accuse Richard of amorous enterprise and Emilie of feminine boldness. Let them remember the moonlight and the solitude and the adventure and the mutual sympathy that is not dependent on time and that cannot be awakened or benumbed at will. There are those who will think it too little, who will accuse Richard of coldness, and Emilie of Colombinish coquetry. Let them remember the moonlight and the solitude and the adventure and the mutual sympathy independent of time but not recklessly to be encouraged by place and propitiousness by delicately-minded potential lovers. The very circumstances that called for half avowels prohibited full avowals.

It was as confident companions that they began to search for an exit. How huge seemed the park to be as the moon came up in the refulgent regality of night. How tall grew the trees, how long grew the shad-

ows. Greenness became greener and whiteness whiter. Spectral shapes seemed to move startlingly. It was easily possible to imagine the grounds peopled with ghosts, the ghosts of Queens long dead, Queens whose stateliness on their white pedestals dissolved into human fragility as their hair fell down and brushed their bosoms with gold. Ghosts of marquises in pale blue gowns, carrying beribboned canes, glided by; and ghosts of their old-time lovers in silk and satin and powdered wigs encountered them gallantly. Haveling murmured intermittently the verses of Verlaine—the Colloque Sentimental of two spectral forms in a solitary park, who pensively evoked the past:

Te souvient-il de notre extase ancien?
Pourquoi voulez-vous donc qu'il m'en souvien.

Ton cœur bat-il toujours à mon seul nom?
Toujours vois-tu mon âme en rêve?—Non.

Ah! les beaux jours de bonheur indicible
Ou nous joignions nos bouches!—C'est possible.

Qu'il était bleu, le ciel, et grand l'espoir!
L'espoir a fui, vaincu, vers le ciel noir.

Why should he at the dawning of their own love have found pleasure in reciting the musical melancholy of old loves fallen on forgetfulness? Mystery of all happiness, which always strives to find the point of tristesse that enhances it! Sometimes Emilie was frightened as a ghost rustled through the trees with a low wail, and she clung tightly to the arm of Richard. Richard unconsciously pressed her waist reassuringly. They were, if the truth must be told, in no hurry to discover a negotiable exit. But at last they found the wall not too high to be practicable which led into a private garden and, after some consultation, they decided that it offered a chance of escape. They would have to knock at the servants' door and explain, but they believed that they would be allowed to depart with proper discretion.

It was a harder job than they had reckoned to scale the wall. With the aid of a chair, Emilie managed, however, to get on

top of it, and Richard helped her down. He had plucked a rose and presented it to her, when the plaintive voice—Au clair de la lune—was heard. They remained throughout the playing of the sad tale of the pale Pierrot and the fickle Colombine and the glittering Harlequin, leaning against the rose-covered wall, too amazed to speak or move. More than ever were things unreal. Had they simply fallen asleep in the park, and were they now dreaming? . . .

CHAPTER VIII

PUTTING THE WORLD TO RIGHTS

M. LEPIC was the first to arrive for dinner. This must not be taken to denote an impatient appetite. He had professional duties to fulfil, for in these days of Communism, who knows but that even a private political party held in the Presidential apartments of the Senate might be made the occasion of an unpleasant manifestation. M. Lepic took no chances, and after an exchange of greetings with M. de Rotor, the President, personally made the tour of the garden to assure himself that no miscreant was lurking there. Having prodded the rose-bushes and peeped into every arbour, he was satisfied that nothing was to be feared from that side of the garden, and for a moment or two he permitted himself the luxury of meditation in the warm evening air.

All the suave odours of flowers, and all

the soft colours of creation, had made a rendez-vous in that delightful place. What could be wrong with the world? What could be his function in such a perfectly ordered garden? He sighed to think that these old walls did not circumscribe the universe. The moonlight went to his head like wine, and though his own occupation would be gone, he found himself dreaming of a society as well ordered, as colourful, as suave, as peaceful, as the garden.

Then he went out to the Rue de Vaugirard and ascertained that his police were posted as he had planned. No lumbering omnibuses were allowed to roll recklessly down the narrow street. Dare-devil taxi-drivers had to proceed at a snail's pace. The way was kept clear for the distinguished persons who were expected.

"There has been a late sitting at the Chamber," he told M. de Rotor. "Doubtless M. Hellié, the Minister, and M. Milgraine, the Deputy who controls such an important group, will be a little late."

M. de Rotor rarely spoke. He merely nodded his fine senatorial head. He had

grown white in the service of his country, and he had discovered that although oratory carries one far, silence may carry one still farther. He never made any indiscretions. He never committed himself. Everybody regarded him as the Nestor of the Assembly. He looked the part, with his carefully trimmed long beard, his bushy eyebrows over deepset eyes, his magnificent mane of hair crowning his leonine head. "They were discussing the case of Professor Pelle," went on the Prefect. "Naturally, a good deal of heat was engendered, and at one moment I feared a free fight on the floor of the House."

M. de Rotor raised his eyebrows, deprecatingly.

"Happily, the Senate still preserves the traditions of decorum," remarked M. Lepic. "I am afraid Parliamentary institutions would sink very low did not the Senate stand firm and placid in all circumstances."

M. de Rotor was plainly in agreement. But now the company began to assemble. There was first M. Oscar Kanto, the indefatigable American, whose portrait appeared in every Paris newspaper whenever he vis-

ited the French capital. He visited it often. It was one of his ports of call on his annual tour of Europe. What floods of eloquence he let loose at each halting-place on the Continent! The number of interviews which he accorded was prodigious. Usually, too, he appeared before the Chamber of Commerce, and invariably he made a speech at the American Club.

He never stayed long but he always stayed long enough to explain to his hosts the precise policy they should pursue. The United States had declined to be entangled in European affairs; therefore, Mr. Oscar Kanto took upon himself in his private capacity the rôle of America. There could be no better representative. At a glance, he saw what was wrong with Austria, with Hungary, with Italy, with Germany, with England, with France; nor must it be supposed that his knowledge was confined to the countries thus summarily mentioned: it extended to Africa and to Asia. In a word, his advice was invaluable, and, happily for the world, it was recognised to be invaluable. Had anybody a profounder insight into the complications

of diplomacy? Did anybody possess such a supreme sense of international finance? The trouble was that Mr. Oscar Kanto, in spite of superhuman qualities, could not be ubiquitous. No sooner had he left Vienna than the Viennese Government forgot his precepts. When he had been absent from Berlin for a week, unfortunately the rulers of the Reich lost their compass. If only, however, he could have kept Paris straight, all would have been well, but even Paris, though profiting by his annual visit, quickly lapsed into its old ways. He had besides, a natural delicacy in intervening in the domestic affairs of France, and, after all, little permanent good could be accomplished unless there were effective intervention. Mr. Kanto, for the rest, was a short, broad-shouldered man, with the heavy face of a thinker who was also a man of action.

"Never on any of my previous tours," he proclaimed, as he entered, "have I been so favourably impressed with what I have seen. I am persuaded that a new era is opening."

M. de Rotor smiled indulgently. His smile might be interpreted to mean that he

did not doubt the opening of a new era, but had seen so many new eras open in a long career that he doubted whether it would make much difference.

"But here is my old friend, Lord Appleberry," cried Mr. Kanto. "Well, Appleberry, my boy, I was just telling the President of the favourable impression made upon me by all I have seen and heard. Your own country, it appears to a humble observer like myself, is doing splendidly—splendidly, I repeat, though I shall have to make certain reservations which I am sure you will appreciate."

Lord Appleberry was the true type of the British idealist. He was calm and self-possessed, speaking slowly and with authority. Before the war he had been known as a Conservative, and his enemies had called him reactionary. But since the war he had thrown himself—if such a stately entry can be described as throwing himself—into every progressive movement making for the betterment of humanity. No international association was complete without him—that is to say, no orthodox international associa-

tion; for Communism and Roman Catholicism, and even Esperantism, he regarded as merely heterodoxical fads. He was a pillar of the society which bore the appellation of Hands Across the Sea. He was the Vice-President of the Friends of France. Perhaps there was nothing on which he prided himself so much as being a Friend of France. Few opportunities of reminding people that he was a Friend of France escaped him. Politically in England, it must be confessed, he had been a failure, and had occupied Ministerial office only for a few months. But he consoled himself with the reflection that he was fulfilling a nobler mission in spreading the idea of universal intercourse. Unofficially, he was always present at the Geneva gatherings, and was ready to lecture on the League of Nations whenever an audience could be secured for him. The League of Nations, he affirmed, would prove to be the salvation of the world. But, of course, it was unthinkable that the League of Nations should interfere with the strictly domestic concerns of the British Empire, which had demonstrated its ability to deal in a

spirit of justice with all problems that might arise affecting its interest. It should be understood, then, that the League of Nations was not a rival of the British Empire, but was, so to speak, the complement and the prolongation of the British Empire, which was through it exercising its beneficent influence on less enlightened countries. Lord Appleberry was tall in stature, with a slight stoop. He wore an eyeglass, and emphasised his most telling points by slowly removing the monocle and holding it before him like a mirror.

"I am gratified by your approbation," he said to Mr. Oscar Kanto, after bowing to the President. "I am convinced that we are on the right lines. For my part, as a Friend of France—which I have never ceased to be, in spite of differences on matters of detail which have appeared—I say appeared—to separate us, there has never been any doubt of our fundamental agreement. That implies no antagonism towards Germany. On the contrary, my own view is that the immense problems which confront us in our

modern world can all be solved by the establishment of concord."

"Do not forget the important part that high finance, often abused, must play in providing a nexus of common interest which will bring about solidarity," Mr. Oscar Kanto reminded him.

"I do not forget," replied Lord Appleberry, beginning to glow—if the word glow is taken as used in its subdued sense. "But, above all, it is necessary to substitute friendships for hatreds, goodwill for suspicion. What could be simpler? We must," he went on, taking out his eyeglass to show that he was making a point, "induce the lion to lie down with the lamb. Then all will be well with the world."

"Surely, that is begging the question," interpolated M. Rouchon, the famous Senator, who began life as a chansonnier but had since become interested in coal. "Suppose the lion remains fierce. Suppose the lamb remains timid."

"I can only answer that," returned Lord Appleberry, "by referring you to a celebrated compatriot of my own, who will appeal to

you as a fellow poet. Edmund Spenser has related for us the story of Una and the Lion and has shown how Innocence can triumph over Might."

Now the company began to troop in. There was M. Grosjean, the director of the *Moniteur Parisien*, reputed to be the wittiest man in Paris, though generally he was asleep, even at table, and woke up at intervals to utter a sparkling sally that had no reference to the subject under discussion. He came forward, remarking:

"Unfortunately for your argument, if women are given the vote in France they will fall into the hands of the priests and will suppress the drinking of wine on which our national prosperity depends."

Professor Pelle, with his short, brown beard, which gave him the appearance of not having shaved for five days, entered arm-in-arm with the Dean, a sad-eyed, elderly man.

"There," declared Lord Appleberry, "is an example to which I draw your attention. The lion, after the battle of the university, lies down with the lamb. If only nations would do the same!"

"Who is the lion, pray, and who the lamb?" murmured Professor Pelle.

"I do not think such invidious distinctions should be drawn," called out M. Hellié, a bustling, pompous gentleman, who was the Minister they were awaiting. "Now that everything is settled satisfactorily, would it not be well to let bygones be bygones, and let Professor Pelle dwell in amity with the Dean."

"It was a hot struggle," said M. Milgraine, the obsequious Deputy, who followed M. Hellié. "Never in my Parliamentary experience do I remember such a momentous debate. It might have turned either way. The Government would have fallen, as Monsieur Le Ministre will acknowledge, had I not brought up my forces. What a victory! What a vindication of honour! It may well be said that France breathes again. If we had lost, who could have answered for the fate of my poor country, a prey to the ravenous wolves of an unscrupulous opposition? Black-hearted, self-seeking men they are who put Party above Principle, Politics above the Nation."

"We have done something to redeem Parliament in the eyes of the People," declaimed M. Hellié. "Equity has prevailed over the forces of inquity and Professor Pelle gets his job."

"Shall we not continue this discussion at table?" asked M. de Rotor.

They passed into the dining-hall, a small but choice company, and as there were no ladies present, it was possible for them to take serious counsel together and to consider the wrongs of a world which they were anxious to put to rights.

The voice of Mr. Oscar Kanto was heard above the hubbub of the table:

"One must admit that the fiduciary problem in France might at times have become grave," he asserted, "but happily we have laid down laws of sound finance. There is nothing easier than to restore order in the currency. To stop the fall of the franc, there should be measures of stabilisation, and with stabilisation, we have restoration. Do I make myself clear?"

"As a Friend of France," indicated Lord Appleberry, "I have long advocated the

course which I am glad to see is gradually commending itself to the experts."

"Undoubtedly," went on Mr. Oscar Kanto. "With becoming modesty, I may claim to be the true author of the Dawes report, and in it you will find enunciated the. . . ."

"Besides," said M. Grosjean, suddenly awaking, "the incompetence of women in political and financial matters is notorious. They cannot buy a hat without. . . . How, then, could they direct the national economy. . . ."

So they took counsel together, and the moonlit night lay pleasant in the garden. Who can doubt the contribution that such conversations, in which the best minds of various countries unfold themselves freely in intimate intercourse—veritable International Parliaments—bring to the solution of the gigantic questions of our day? Who can doubt that the world is being put to rights?

"I have an announcement to make," said M. de Rotor, who had preserved silence throughout the repast. "It occurred to me, gentlemen, that it would not be disagreeable

to you, after the arduous consultations of this evening, in which we have tackled in serried fashion the evils with which we are beset, to smoke a cigar on the terrace under the quiet moon and to witness a little dumb performance which actors from the Odéon have kindly prepared for us. M. Rouchon, who is a poet, actively bestirred himself in these arrangements, and with his peculiar acquaintance with the dramatic art of France, obtained for us the privilege of enjoying a spectacle which will be an intellectual refreshment. Let us now, therefore, our duty accomplished, proceed well satisfied to the terrace."

From the terrace they saw the pantomime of Pierrot and Colombine and Harlequin. They felt themselves bathed in beauty, and their cigars were more fragrant than the flowers.

"They excel in these things," whispered Mr. Oscar Kanto to his neighbour.

"We have a saying in England," replied Lord Appleberry, "which must not be taken too literally, that they do these things better in France."

M. Grosjean was fast asleep, comforted with the consciousness that he had added to his reputation. The Dean was sadder-eyed than ever, thinking of his youth. Professor Pelle stroked his unshaven chin, contented. M. Hellié nodded his head approvingly, and was imitated by M. Milgraine. M. de Rotor had, after his long speech, fallen resolutely on silence. As for M. Lepic, he was, moved by professional instinct, making another tour of the garden.

It was thus that he came upon Richard and Emilie. M. Lepic never hesitated. He sprang upon Richard with astonishing vigour and pulled him to the ground. Then, in the light of the moon, he saw the face of Haveling.

"This is too much, Mr. Paname!" he exclaimed. "One can pardon your peccadilloes, but what mischief are you up to here?"

Emilie shrunk back into the shade, affrighted. Richard laughed. "There is no need for you to prove that you are younger than ever," he told M. Lepic. "Let me get up and I will explain. But first I must

apologise for this intrusion. We were locked in the park and were seeking a way out."

M. Lepic glared at him suspiciously for an instant, and then accepted the explanation. But he did not believe in the innocence of the couple.

"Locked in," he growled. "Purely by accident, of course."

"Truly, it was unintentional," protested Richard. "I must ask you not to doubt my word of honour, if not for myself, for the sake of Emilie Renaud."

"So this is Emilie Renaud. Will you be good enough to present me?"

Emilie timidly acknowledged the salutation of the Prefect.

"My felicitations on the accident," said M. Lepic.

"Can you not," asked Richard, "get us away with all discretion?"

"Impossible," snapped the Prefect. "The company is on the terrace. Moreover, I am sure we should all be delighted to know the celebrity of whom all Paris is talking."

It had not hitherto occurred to Emilie that she was a celebrity. The idea distressed her.

"Come, Mademoiselle," said the Prefect, kindly; "there is no occasion for shyness. I will introduce you as my friends, and nobody will require explanations."

Willy-nilly, they were compelled to approach the terrace where Pierrot, Colombine and Harlequin were already receiving the congratulations of the party. The appearance of Emilie and Richard surprised them, but they made no comment, and expressed themselves, one after the other, to be pleased at the unexpected opportunity of meeting Emilie Renaud. Mr. Paname was already acquainted with most of the men. The President was extremely courteous, and they were soon at their ease.

"I suppose you are going to the reception of André Rhobert," said M. Hellié. Everybody in Paris will be at his atelier at midnight, and I myself propose to look in. It is my business to patronise the arts."

"True!" exclaimed Richard. "I had forgotten that it was to-night. Of course, we cannot miss it."

"I should be happy, if you have arranged for no other accommodation," declared M.

Hellié, "to take you and Mademoiselle with me in my car."

"That is an honour which I should have been glad to reserve for myself," remarked M. Rouchon, "but I give way to the Victor of to-day."

Emilie was troubled. She had not counted on making a public appearance in such circumstances at the notorious nocturnal receptions of Rhobert, and she was doubtful whether she should allow herself to be accompanied by Richard.

Colombine drew her aside. "Rhobert has been looking for you this evening," she informed Emilie. "He wanted to take you himself but could not find you at your hotel. He told us so, as he slipped into the Odéon, and seemed rather perturbed."

This did not add to the comfort of Emilie, who was afraid that her adventure in the park might produce unpleasant complications. But there was no help for it, and she resigned herself to the proposal of M. Hellié, trusting that he would not reveal the strange circumstances of their meeting.

CHAPTER IX

ART AT MIDNIGHT

A POWERFUL negress, nearly nude, was in charge of the vestiaire and took the hats and coats of the ladies and gentlemen who arrived punctually at midnight to inspect the pictures in the huge atelier of André Rhobert in the quiet district of Passy, where people normally put themselves to bed at ten p.m.

André Rhobert, when he began to be successful, moved away from the usual haunts of the Paris artists and built for himself a studio in a quarter where the artist was regarded as a freak of nature. It was amusing to bring fashionable folk away from the centre and away from the traditional artistic colonies. It shocked the curiosity of his bourgeois neighbours. Besides, it was good business. André Rhobert was looked upon as a spoilt child, at whose eccentricities of

behaviour one smiled. What could be more eccentric than to paint at Passy! Art is chiefly a matter of geography. Attempts have been made by society to shut the artists in their ghettos at Montmartre, at Montparnasse, at Barbizon, at Greenwich Village, at Chelsea, and so forth, and, on the whole, the artists have been content to stay in quarantine. Since Rhobert broke out of the fold it has, of course, become perfectly proper and usual (the two words are synonyms) for the artist to live at Passy, in the West End, and on Park Avenue.

The smart automobiles, which had brought visitors to his nocturnal reception, were so numerous that they had to station themselves in all the neighbouring streets. Their rich owners had to make their way on foot, unless they cared to spend half an hour in approaching the atelier. It was the most extraordinary collection of notabilities and non-notabilities, of the art world, the literary world, the theatrical world, the social world, the demi-world, the demi-semi-world, the demi-semi-demi-world, and the world that is no world at all. Tout-Paris, as it is called, is

the maddest mélange that it is possible to imagine. It comes from Deauville, from Cannes, from Costa Rica, from Czecho-Slovakia, and from other cosmopolitan resorts where nationality is nothing, but where wealth or the appearance of wealth, or the desire for wealth, is everything.

The nearly naked negress was overwhelmed that night. Her great, gaudy earrings, her glittering breast-plates, her multicoloured oripeaux, were in a state of perpetual agitation. The perspiration shone on her shining skin. She began to be bewildered. It was her proudest boast that no matter how big the company she never confused their garments. She did not give them numbered tickets, as less expert white servants would have done. She relied entirely on her memory, and nobody complained that he had received the wrong stick, or a hat which did not fit him. But to-night, she began to lose her customary equanimity, and one foresaw at last the most frightful jumble of wearing apparel which it would be impossible to sort out.

Around the walls were hung more paint-

ings of women—and of men, too—than could be counted. André Rhobert is the true begetter of the new woman, with her long supple lines, her Kohl-stained eyes, her shimmering robe, her long string of pearls. Others have claimed that distinction, but no judicious student of modern art and of modern women could, without disingenuousness, deny the paternity of André Rhobert. One had only to look around the room—where there were no chairs and little furniture of any description, for it was one of the pranks played by Rhobert on his victims that they should stand and never repose—to see that the slender women, with short-cropped hair, had modelled themselves on Rhobert's portraits. The women seemed to have descended from their frames to dance and disport themselves on the floor. One expected them at any moment to regain their frames, to return to their fixed langorous or vivacious poses. André Rhobert has, I suppose, more sitters or would-be sitters than any painter in the world. It is not by flattery that he obtains them. If he chooses to give them a green complexion, if he chooses to flatten

them under the steam-roller of his art, if he chooses to elongate their noses or their hands or their feet, he obeys his whims and, for the most part, his models are delighted. Sometimes he leaves them with only one eye. Sometimes the eye slips from its normal place. Occasionally their necks resemble those of giraffes. But all is good that André Rhobert does. He has discovered that impertinence is the infallible passport to the good opinion of society.

The Comtesse Marthe de Montadour, the delicious poetess with the great eyes fringed with long lashes, garbed, in spite of the warm night, in furs, was rehearsing the prettiest and the wittiest paradoxes to the gratification of the celebrated Marquis de Douilles who, in spite of his age, is regarded as the arbiter of fashion. The Marquis had just published the most amazingly scandalous memoires in which he recounted his extravagances, extravagances which had been rendered possible by his marriage to a fabulously rich American heiress.

"I have not yet decided," she said, or rather hung, in her beautiful, cadenced voice,

"whether Art is an imitation of Nature or Nature an imitation of Art. You remember how Wilde tried to show that Whistler actually changed the climate of London by introducing into his pictures the mysterious loveliness of silver mists. I wonder whether that is true. I wonder whether the white quivering sunshine of France, with strange blotches of mauve and restless violet shadows, really existed unnoticed before Monet and Sisley and Pissarro. I wonder whether there were sunsets before Turner, and landscapes before Poussin."

"Dear Countess," replied the Marquis de Douilles, not to be outdone, "I was for many years a friend of Wilde and often have I heard him demonstrate that Fact is always trying to catch up with Fiction. I told him that Hamlet, though unmarried, had left many descendants. I told him that Rousseau was the father of Robespierre. I told him that Balzac created the Nineteenth Century."

"How true," agreed the Countess. "One might add to-day that Turgeniev and Dostoievski are responsible for the Bolsheviks.

But I admire André Rhobert because he has modified the female form."

"The female form was good enough for me in the old days," returned the Marquis, reminiscently. "My ideal woman was the belle fille. Her feminirity was pronounced. Tell me, my dear Countess, how is it possible for women to discard their charms as they discard their crinolines?"

"Ah! Marquis, that is the eternal mystery of the relations of Art and Life. For my part, I have always preferred the André Rhobert type. I was, so to speak, a Rhobertiste before Rhobert. But certainly it is a far cry from the feminine rotundities of Rubens and even from the rose-coloured contours of Renoir to the supple silhouettes of André Rhobert. Before the war the Rubens and Renoir type predominated. After the war the Rhobert type has prevailed. What is modernity? Its essential quality, it seems to me, is the rejection of superfluous ornamentation that breaks the line."

All about them similar conversations were proceeding. It was generally acknowledged that André Rhobert, the painter à la mode,

was not merely the interpreter of an epoch, but was the originator of an epoch. He had launched, not a fashion in dress, but a fashion in physique. He would have been a bold man who would have disputed this axiom. Nature was creeping up to André Rhobert.

The groups of men and women formed and scattered and re-formed. Everybody had thus an opportunity of repeating the bons mots of his last interlocutor. Although André Rhobert was the single theme, he had not yet appeared on the scene. He loved to make his guests await his presence.

"Let us hope," remarked Lord Appleberry, punctuating his joke with his monocle, "that André Rhobert will not dictate the masculine mode and compel us all to wear Chinese whiskers."

"They would not be becoming to me," asserted Mr. Oscar Kanto.

"Fashions are for women, not for men," proclaimed M. Rouchon. "I am convinced that Rhobert is not a Shylock to cut off pounds of our flesh."

"The shape of women," said M. Grosjean,

opening his eyes, "is of no importance, provided they are not allowed to enter politics."

M. de Rotor nodded his assent.

A slight sensation was produced by the entrance of the Count Abélard Costi de la Brière, otherwise known as Bibi-la-Bohème. He was magnificent in a costume which he had obtained for the occasion from one of his friends. He wore a redingote with a velvet collar, drawn tightly in at the waist. It was much too small for him, and his forearms protruded six inches from the sleeves. His chest was puffed out by a ragged jabot of frilly lace. His waistcoat was of a doubtful white, on which were worked sprigs of pink flowers. His trousers were baggy to excess but did not reach to his ankles. With head thrown back, he marched to the centre of the room and then bowed solemnly in all directions with sweeping gestures.

Behind came the blonde Lisa, a little intimidated, and Paulette, who could not refrain from giggling, in spite of the admonitions of Tom Quickly. Suzy bounded along on the arm of Georges Jouvence, who tried in vain to restrain her. The white mask of

his face was pathetically imploring, and the laurel-like wreath of his hair appeared to be slipping over his left ear. Arsène Le Duc remained a little in the rear, somewhat ashamed of his associates, his black beard buried in his bosom. Henri Roi, at the express desire of André Rhobert, came in his green vestment. He had at first refused this public parade, but Rhobert, was not a man to miss a chance of advertisement and had insisted until Henri Roi felt obliged to meet the wishes of the man who was, after all, his patron.

The Countess Marthe de Mantadour went to him with an ecstatic smile. She never failed to take up the picturesque persons who got into the newspapers. Bibi-la-Bohème was soon surrounded by an attentive throng, as he deplored in a rich voice which resounded in the atelier, the decay into which the study of Greek was falling.

"It was different in my day," he told Professor Pelle. "Then students were students, and although they amused themselves, they respected the Classics. To-day, my friends the students think that Science alone mat-

ters. How many of them can read the Greek authors? I have found time to devote myself to Science, too, and my theory that Man has descended from the Frog is well known. But I always carry with me my *Iliad*."

"Students have become impossible," said the Professor. "They actually want to choose their masters."

"No, no, you must not speak ill of them," protested Bibi. "They remain my companions, despite their errors. What is there to console us to-day except the students and —the birds?"

To what purpose recite the names of all the guests? They are to be found in the *Bottin Mondain*. Here one observed Cécile Sorel, of the Comedie Francaise; there Mademoiselle Mistinguett, of the Casino de Paris. Yvette Guilbert, older and stouter than in the days when she sang in her green dress and long black gloves, was in conversation with Nikita Balieff, of the Chauve Souris. The guests pointed out Maurice Rostand, his golden head aflame, and Robert de Flers, and Paul Boncour, looking as Dantonesque as possible. Paul Morand and Henri Béraud,

of the sword-like pen, tried to pass unnoticed in the throng. There was the eloquent Maitre Henri Robert, and René Doumic, of the Académie Francaise. It would be easier to draw up the list of the absentees than to enumerate the actors and writers and politicians who came to the reception of André Rhobert. It was the most brilliant private function—if, indeed, it could be called private—of the season.

"So that is Tom Quickly," said Mr. Oscar Kanto, admiring the handsome head of the red-bearded journalist. "I am told he has Communist leanings."

"Scratch a Communist and you will discover a Patriot," answered Lord Appleberry. "He remains a good Englishman. It is merely the mode to have Communist leanings. The redness is only the redness of the radish—skin deep. He was the tutor to one of my children."

A hush fell on the assembly as André Rhobert made his sudden apparition. He had disdained to dress. He was in a silken blouse smeared with paint. He led by the hand Fanny Fulger, of the Palace. Their names

were freely coupled. Fanny Fulger had a most attractive presence. She could not dance, she could not sing, she could not speak her part; but she was universally admired.

She it was who opened the ball. When the grand piano—the only piece of furniture in the room—was pushed forward, there was a moment of misgiving. The guests feared the worst. But they were wrong. The piano was only to serve as the platform of Fanny Fulger, on which she danced, if this display of legs was dancing. The applause was terrific. It had been hard to get her up, but it was harder to get her down. She affected apprehension charmingly as she fell into Rhobert's arms.

It was precisely as the musicians were tuning up for the fox-trot that a belated party of four, M. Hellié, the Minister, M. Milgraine, the Deputy, and Emilie and Richard entered together. Rhobert saw them and his face clouded.

"Welcome!" he cried, "to Monsieur le Ministre, who honours us to-night. He brings with him Emilie Renaud, whom we

shall soon have the pleasure of seeing at the Cabaret des Alchimistes."

Every eye was turned on Emilie, who thought she would have died under the concentrated gaze of Tout-Paris. She had taken off her cloak and was in the filmy garments of the afternoon rehearsal. Exquisite did she look, and there was a unanimous murmur of astonishment and of delight. This was the first time she had gone into the World. The World which had begun to hear of her and was on the tiptoe of expectation, was not disappointed. Her beauty exceeded anticipation. Like the Queen of Sheba, the World confessed that the half had not been told. That she was obviously shrinking, that she had none of the brazen beauty of Fanny Fulger, was found particularly pleasing. Fanny Fulger, regarding her as a rival, was plainly annoyed. She glowered at her.

M. Hellié could not resist the temptation of making a short speech. He congratulated himself on the occasion which presented itself at the close of a trying day of Parliamentary debate—as to which he would say nothing—to associate himself with this im-

portant Manifestation in Art. It was his duty but it was none the less his pride to witness in favour of the Æsthetic Pre-eminence of France. They were enraptured to know that the long traditions of their country were being maintained worthily, and if he might allude to it, he would remind them that as late as the night before they had most of them been present at the most striking Opera Ball given in recent memory—a Ball which owed its éclat to the incomparable conceptions of their host, André Rhobert, whom he did not hesitate to describe as a genius to whom France was grateful.

Emilie's ordeal during the process of presentation appeared to her interminable. Rhobert took her from one group to another, and everywhere there were the same words of flattery. There was a conspiracy to render her homage. She could not help thinking that a few hours before she had been faint for want of food, with nobody to help her—except Richard, who by accident had entered her life. She had done nothing whatever to change the stony attitude of an indifferent public towards her. She owed

its good graces entirely to réclame—to a few newspaper articles arranged for by Rhobert. It was doubtless foolish of her, but she felt no thankfulness to Rhobert or to Arsène Le Duc or to M. Grosjean or to anybody—except Richard.

Of course, there was also her uncle. Her uncle stood there in bitter mood. He loved Emilie too well to have any joy in her factitious triumph. He was frankly afraid of the future. Was it better to starve than to be the buffoons of Society? He was conscious that he was a buffoon—but Emilie was in her way a buffoon, too. Even now he was ready to renounce the prospect that was opening out. Clowns, playthings, artificial creatures tickling an artificial taste of an artificial public! Who would such fardels bear? Was there no reality, or rather, could they not hug their illusions, he his illusions about Henri Quatre, she her illusions about the Dance, without coining them into money, without sinking to the level of the André Rhoberts, without sinking to the level of the public which only asked to be amused

by charlatans, and made charlatans of those who would be sincere?

Rhobert drew Richard aside. He positively glared. "I did not know you were acquainted with Emilie," he said.

"Nor was I until last evening," answered Richard mildly.

"You accompanied her here, Mr. Paname," snarled Rhobert. "She was not at her hotel when I called."

"I do not propose to account to you, either for my own or her doings," said Richard, beginning to get hot.

"Very well. But let us understand each other. I will not have you or anybody else interfering with Emilie."

"I do not know by what right you address me on this subject. Be assured that it will make not the slightest difference to my conduct—and although I cannot, of course, speak on her behalf, I trust it will make no difference to her conduct. But I decline altogether to pursue the matter further."

"I have warned you—that will suffice," concluded Rhobert, turning on his heel angrily.

The blood mounted to Richard's head. He could hardly prevent himself from throwing himself on Rhobert and striking him publicly. The thought that he had no right to compromise Emilie enabled him to master himself in time.

Thus began the duel between the two men.

As he remained wondering at this brusque attack and what it implied, there fell upon his ears the dainty piping of a shepherd's pipe. The dawn by the Pont Neuf swam before him. He saw the herd of goats in the quiet streets with the pastoral figure of Aristide.

Rhobert had neglected nothing. He had brought Aristide the Goatherd into the crowded atelier. Richard, as the flock went through the gaping crowd with a tinkling of bells and a piping of pipes, was shaken by unutterable disgust.

CHAPTER X

TÊTE-À-TÊTE IN A TAXI-CAB

MR. PANAME decided that without delay he must snatch Emilie from the Rhobert party and have a serious conversation with her. But the opportunity was not easy to find. Rhobert was dancing with her, and Richard's heart filled with rage as he saw the leering face with the Chinese whiskers over the shoulder of the girl who was the cynosure of all eyes. He determined that, come what might, he would have the next dance with her. Hardly had the last notes of the fox-trot ceased than he approached her.

"You must dance with me," he said, with unwonted sternness, as already half a dozen men came forward to claim her.

"Certainly, Richard," answered Emilie, and she began to express her regrets to her would-be partners.

This was a direct challenge to André Rhobert. The painter recognised it as such. His indignation was written on his countenance. Richard surveyed him coolly as they circled round, as their paths crossed, and as they collided on the crowded floor. The painter had for partner Fanny Fulger, who, for her part, was seriously annoyed. It was curious how quickly the drama—for drama it was, though unseen by the company—had developed. Richard and Rhobert realised in a flash that they were rivals. Emilie was aware that she was the subject of contention and wished she had not come to the reception. She was anxious to escape, but did not know how she could retire unnoticed. She thought of feigning a sudden indisposition and of appealing to her uncle to take her home. Fanny, with a woman's instinct, felt on her side the influence which Emilie might exercise over Rhobert, and foresaw herself deposed.

For a moment, Richard, content and even triumphant, with Emilie's hand on his shoulder, relapsed into his rôle of the Sentimental Observer. He took in the whole scene—the

black pianist, the mulatto fiddler, the jigging saxophonist, and the gymnastic drummer, who were creating a syncopated din, shouting savagely, occasionally breaking into bursts of song. In this pandemonium the couples executed fantastic movements. The music had worked them up to a morbid pitch of excitement. They gave themselves to the rhythm in a positive frenzy. From the wall a great company of placid women in paint gazed down on their trepidant sisters, whose volutations were vertiginous. In the midst of the agitation Richard caught sight now and again of the convulsed countenance of Rhobert. That he should get Emilie away from the tumultuous atelier was a purpose that was confirmed with every revolution on the turbulent floor. It was not easy to talk in this turmoil, but he whispered in staccato phrases:

"Emilie, you must come away—I have much to say to you—immediately the dance is over I shall hurry downstairs—please follow me."

She heard in the effervescent hubbub, and answered:

"I desire nothing better—but do you think it possible?

The band played louder and louder, and the dancers quivered and quavered, reeled and swayed, writhed and shuffled, whirling palpitatingly to the irregular measure of the intoxicating music.

"Nothing could be easier," he assured her —"there will be a moment of confusion and you must take advantage of it to fly from the hurly-burly."

The throng foamed and boiled and bubbled, jostled, buffeted, the sport of the tempestuous ragtime.

"And my uncle?" she asked.

"He will find his way home with the others."

"It is not that—but will he not be troubled by my disappearance?"

"No, why should he suppose anything but the truth—that you have slipped away from a bedlam, where neither you nor he are at ease?"

As he spoke, he glanced around. He saw that the greater part of the assembly had been caught up in the maelstrom and was en-

joying the dizzy round. In the surge he saw Lisa and Suzy and Paulette, Arsène and Georges and Tom, who were eddying madly. Pierrot and Colombine and Harlequin were curveting. Even Bibi-la-Bohème was spinning like a teetotum with a well-known society lady, pleased with her extraordinary partner. They were shivering and shaking in a violent ferment. They rotated in a giddy vortex. The epileptic pulsation was faster and faster, as the encouraging shouts of the musicians were louder and louder.

"It's understood—I shall be waiting for you," said Richard as there was a final crash and the dancers came to a standstill, trembling, twittering, after their saltatory exercise. He had swung Emilie to the door, and without further words, was gone. From the nearly naked negress he had taken his hat and was out in the street, hailing a taxi-cab. It seemed long before the figure of Emilie emerged but it was in reality the matter of a moment. She had left the crowd still breathless and deafened, and she would not be missed for some minutes.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Richard, "you have come."

"You did not doubt it," she returned.

"No, I was sure of you. But jump in quickly."

He gave the address to the chauffeur. "Not too fast," he added. The taxi-cab started. Emilie was sitting by his side. They looked into each other's eyes. They had been drawn together by everything that had occurred. It seemed to be long years that they had known each other—there was perhaps never a time when they had not known each other. They had known each other since the beginning of the world. They had known each other eternally. What, after all, is time? It is certainly not to be measured by clocks. When Richard considered that his acquaintance in the literal sense dated only from the previous afternoon, that his acquaintance with Henri Roi dated only from the previous night, he was amazed at the inadequacy of our expressions denoting duration. There was no relation between those paltry hours and the stupendous events—for they were to him stupen-

dous—which had those hours for theatre. There was a predestined sympathy, a foreordained affection, between him and Emilie that had no need of days and weeks and months and years to manifest itself. It was not in the least strange that he should be sitting with her in the cab about to talk to her as an accepted lover. It was no stranger than the immediate impression she had made on him when he saw her dance, no stranger than the manner in which she had responded to his presence in the little room of Henri Roi, no stranger than the companionship of the park, no stranger than the delights of the garden in the moonlight. It was, if you will, all strange, but yet how natural! They had been carried gently on the bosom of a stream together, without asking where they were going, through what embalmed banks they were passing, or what lovely landscape, or what dream country, lay around them.

It was not audacious of him to assert some authority over her; it was not reprehensible of her to submit to his will when he had told her to quit the reception of Rhobert. With-

out words, they understood each other and were of one mind. Their thoughts, their wishes, chimed.

She was not cognisant of what had happened when Rhobert and Richard met, but she had an intuition that it was something which required their instant consultation. She was conscious of a crisis. When Richard suggested that they should leave the ball, he had uttered her own desire aloud. She had checked with feminine modesty Richard's confession in the park: but she did not mean to check it now. It had become necessary.

Nor did he mean to stop at half avowals. A choice had to be made and to be made at once. Before she fell into the power of Rhobert he must make his declaration of love and be accepted or rejected. But there was, of course, no question of rejection. How could he have misgivings? It was not to ascertain Emilie's sentiments that he was to utter his own. He knew them. The picture of the timid, doubtful lover is surely always false. Of what can he doubt? Doubt is dismissed the moment love reigns. As well might the sun doubt whether its rays

will be welcome to the flowers. As well might the flowers ask whether the sun will be disposed to shed its light on them. There is an inevitability about love that cannot be gainsaid. Everything is taken for granted. Nevertheless, it had become advisable to put their amity on a formal footing in order to determine the line of conduct they should pursue.

Something like this was in their minds as they sat facing each other in the taxi-cab. He held her hands and did not speak. The taxi-cab rattled over the stones of Passy. A jolt threw them closer together, and still without speaking, their lips approached and met in a long kiss.

There was no place for half avowals now. That stage had been overpast as a ship leaves its harbour behind and is at once on the open sea.

"My sweetheart!" he murmured. "Richard, my darling!" shone from her eyes as well as escaped from her lips.

Is not the Parisian taxi-cab as appropriate and poetic a place for such a declaration as the Venetian gondola? Richard and Emilie thought so as they rode with joy in their

hearts in the rough, unrepaired rues. They were cradled in the sway and the swing, the switchback motion of the vehicle. While travelling through the populous streets of Paris they were in complete privacy, enclosed and alone. Automobiles whizzed by; great lumbering omnibuses shook the ground; with miracles of skill and sangfroid, collisions were missed by a hair's breadth: but in the interior of the cab Richard and Emilie were tranquil and happy. The immense Trocadéro loomed up and they descended the declivity at its foot. The quais of the river, lit up, casting their reflections in the water on which barges were moored for the night, came into view, and still Richard had not said the things he had drawn her to him to say.

"You forgive me for bringing you away, do you not?" he asked, at last. "Rhobert was furious because we were together. He menaced me. He claimed some kind of proprietorial rights over you. We had a short but sharp quarrel. I felt the position to be impossible. From the moment I met you I knew I loved you and I knew you would

love me. In the park the conviction was not belied. But when the designs of Rhobert became apparent, I could not bear to live another hour without asking you to be my affianced wife. I am not rich but I have sufficient for us two. You are, I gather, poor in worldly goods, but rich in all that I want in a woman. On the other hand, you have perhaps a fascinating future spreading itself before you. It is Rhobert who is providing you with the opportunity of exercising an art which I hold to be wonderful. Now, the problem is whether. . . ."

"Whether I should renounce my art for you?" she interrupted. "I would sacrifice anything for you. But is it necessary?"

"No, I do not think it is necessary," replied Richard. "I would not consent to it. I know how deeply you desire to reveal to the public the result of your studies and your marvellous innate talent. At the same time, there is much that is disagreeable, as I see it, in the method of your presentation to the public. That can pass. It is of little importance. If the public must be told from the housetops what it must like and what

it must dislike, advertisement, distasteful as it is, must be endured. But I am thinking of Rhobert."

"I, too," said Emilie. "I cannot tell you my aversion to him and to his advances. He makes me afraid. But although I have thought since I am being talked about that it would be possible to appear elsewhere than in the Cabaret des Alchimistes, it would hardly be fair, would it? What is sometimes distressing is that I owe so much to him. If you only knew how hard my life has been, you would understand that Rhobert deserves my thanks, though I dislike him. But now everything will be different. You will be my fiancé and I shall be able easily to keep Rhobert at arm's length."

"That is how it seems to me," agreed Richard. "He will be resentful but what of that? He cannot afford to let you go. If he will only stick to his part, as the founder of the Cabaret, there is nothing to trouble you. If he does not, you can threaten to leave him in the lurch. You must tell me immediately if anything goes wrong. Indeed, I have an idea. Until we are married,

let me be your manager. Let me conduct your business dealings with Rhobert."

"That is good of you, and nothing could be better. As long as I am not compelled to have much personal contact with Rhobert, the situation will not be difficult. My poor uncle has, I suppose, been acting as a sort of manager for me, but he requires somebody to act for him as much as I do—perhaps more."

"Well, then, that is settled. And now we can go to your uncle to-morrow and make our announcement. Do you think he will be pleased?"

"I am sure of it."

"And afterwards we will tell Rhobert, and he must accept the position or not, precisely as he pleases."

The taxi-cab was turning over the Pont de la Concorde by the Palais Bourbon into the Boulevard Saint Germain. The meeting-place of the Deputies, agog until the late evening on which the fate of the Government had been decided in the debate on the case of Professor Pelle, was now deserted and dead, a black building with a row of

Grecian pillars facing the Grecian temple of the Madeleine across the stately Place de la Concorde on the Grands Boulevards. In the private houses of the district the remnants of the old nobility of France, now reinforced by nouveaux riches, still preserved the ancient social traditions. The taxi-cab rocked them pleasantly and they gazed at each other, rejoicing in their mutual confidence and in their unashamed love which had not sought to hide itself or to proceed by roundabout ways. Richard decided that the driver of the taxi-cab should have a tip of unprecedented munificence, for never had there been such a satisfactory journey since wheeled vehicles or boats had been invented.

But there was yet one other problem which presented itself. It was more delicate. In spite of their sympathetic understanding, Richard hesitated to broach the subject. He was afraid lest convention should triumph over reason.

"There is one thing more," he said, slowly, kissing her before he continued. "To-day I found you—forgive me for reminding you of it—faint from hunger. Now that cannot be allowed. It would spoil everything. But

it is impossible, as you will acknowledge, for you directly to obtain any money on account from Rhobert. You would not be free were you to accept it."

"That is why I have always refused. He has pressed me several times to take a portion of my first month's fee. I have refused for the reason you know."

"Exactly, and it has been a desperate struggle for you—and for your uncle."

He paused before making the proposal which he was minded to make.

"Listen, Emilie," he ventured, "it would be sheer folly for you to refuse me a pleasure and a privilege which you have refused to Rhobert. One cannot exist without money. Now I have a double right to make some provision for you—and for your uncle. Are we not engaged? But, above all, let us put it on a business ground—am I not your manager? It is not for you to inquire from where and how funds come to you. Say that I on your behalf, without your personal knowledge, sign a contract—say that I stipulate for a payment to seal the bargain—would not that be an ordinary business transaction? Surely, you will not object."

But she did, and there was a long disputation in the taxi-cab, which was now in the Boulevard Raspail before, of war weary, Emilie yielded. So were their affairs straightened out, and there seemed to be no possible impediment to their happiness. The taxi-cab jumped in the air for joy at the rue de Rennes, but came down on its four wheels safely. Richard would ordinarily have been angry with the chauffeur, but to-night he thought the acrobatics of the frisky carriage amusing. Why should not cabs leap like lambs in the Paris streets if they were so inclined? The tip was no less munificent when they reached the Hotel de la Montagne, in the Boulevard du Montparnasse. He would have permitted nobody to depreciate these worthy vehicles in his hearing that night.

He saw Emilie enter the hotel and then strolled down the Boulevard. The perfume of the acacias was delicious. The air was cool and the night was refreshing. He could not yet go indoors. He had too much to meditate upon. He wanted to chew the cud of his happiness.

CHAPTER XI

AT THE TOWER OF BABEL

FOR the Sentimental Observer (which character Mr. Paname was rapidly losing) there was no better vantage place from which to look on life than the spacious terrace of the Café de la Coupole. True, it was a special phase of life but it was a picturesque phase. Here, under the acacias perfuming the air, sat the most heterogeneous crowd it would be possible to find in the whole world. Heterogeneous, that is to say, in race, in language, in appearance; but united by the mysterious liens of Art. Some of them were writers; others were painters; a number of them were musicians; sculptors abounded. The girls were artists' models or the compagnes of artists when they had no pretensions to executive skill of their own. In addition there were many amateurs who liked the society of those who were perhaps working for eternity. There is nothing

which endures, not marble, not steel, not mighty monuments, like a fine verse or a great picture.

The younger generation had taken it into its head that the past could be swept aside, that it was necessary to begin again at the beginning. Those who were sincere would have recognised their efforts to be crude. They would have acknowledged that Cubism and so-called Futurism and Dadaism, which professed to be purely destructive, could not last. It was a period of experimentation, they argued, but it was good that the ready-made rules of the Académie should be ignored, that one should throw off conventions, that one should strive to see for oneself and should seek fresh methods of expression. Painting, as taught by the schools, had been carried to its highest degree of efficiency, and in its wholesale reproduction had become wearisome. To what purpose treat for the millionth time the same theme in the same way? This was the clearest justification of the Montparnasse painters but, unfortunately, they took it to mean that Raphael was to be despised.

Nor did they, for the most part, appreciate the fact that they were learning: they considered the mass of grotesque pictures which they turned out to be superior to the pictures of earlier generations. They came to regard their fumblings as final, their mistakes as discoveries, their lack of métier as admirable in itself. When it was seen that the public swallowed these abortions, the abortions were produced with machine-like regularity. The more ugly the deformation, the greater the avidity with which it was seized upon; and it became the fashion to invent a theory which could be expressed in obscure terms to account for the aberrations of the modern men. Some of the painters had grown rich by the simple process of doing what nobody had done before and thus creating a sensation. Perhaps the leaders to whom the young men looked up had their tongues in their cheeks; perhaps they had finished by believing in themselves. Who knows? But, at any rate, their influence was mischievous in that hundreds of artists thought they saw a short cut to success in mere eccentricity.

A striking example had been furnished by André Rhobert. André Rhobert was now fashionable and fêted, wealthy beyond the imagination of the Montparnassians. But when he began he was poor and remained poor and unnoticed until one day he elaborated an extraordinary doctrine to the effect that our ideas of perspective are entirely wrong. The lines of a table, for instance, should run widening and widening away from us instead of narrowing and narrowing, as our untrained eyes see them. Of course, Perspectivism has long been forgotten. Rhobert himself abandoned it and found it more profitable to conceive the New Woman. Nevertheless, Perspectivism was the origin of his triumph. It had drawn attention to him. It had provoked the most memorable controversy which began in the little artistic revues of the Quarter and soon entered the Paris newspapers, and in the end provided an inexhaustible subject for the writers about Art in England and America. He had made progress since then; he had changed his style completely; he had un-

gratefully endeavoured to forget Perspectivism to which he owed everything.

Is it surprising that the younger men and, indeed, the older unsuccessful men should try to evolve startling theories and were more concerned to be original—poor ill-used word!—than to be artistically honest and competent? Let us not, however, be unfair. There were many who were of fitting humility, who worked with sincerity, who admitted their defects, who were prepared heroically to sacrifice themselves as pioneers, and who had faith that out of the welter there would emerge sooner or later the artistic Messiah. In the meantime, they were ready to hail false prophets. They were not self-seeking. They had within them aspirations which they knew they could not realise, but which they might, at the expense of their own sufferings, help another to realise. Their abnegation was touching, their devotion to the cause of Art profound. Their willingness to worship, though often it resulted in placing an unworthy idol on the pedestal, amply proved their disinterest-

edness. They had the spirit, if not the vision, of John the Baptist.

Though Mr. Paname, as he took his seat on the terrace of the Café de la Coupole in the remote corner by the glass screen, was at first preoccupied by his personal affairs which in such a short time had undergone a revolution, he soon found himself musing, as was his wont, on the significance of these art movements at Montparnasse, the true Capital of the Art of the World. But it was perhaps the human side which most interested him. Around him was the babble of Babel. There was no land, however distant, however politically insignificant, which was not represented at the Café de la Coupole. Richard recalled the story of Genesis. The whole earth was of one language and of one speech. But the sons of Noah said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven. . . . And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is what they begin to do. Go to, let us go down, and

there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore the name of it was called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. But now they had come back from the face of all the earth and had built this café, which was the new Tower of Babel, and although they still spoke each his own language, yet they were drawn together in the all-embracing bonds of Art and were one people with one purpose.

There was the tall thin Hindoo with a turban wound round his head, sitting before his glass of milk; a clever draughtsman to whom were attributed occult powers. There was the Irishman dressed in flannels, noisy and a little drunk, but witty and popular. There was the gaunt Pole, whose weird fancy it was to get himself up like a cow-boy, doubtless hoping thus to appeal to American buyers. There was the man in

sandals and Greek robes, whose hair fell over his shoulders. There was the pretty girl with swarthy burnished skin, clad in green—the girl whom a thousand artists had painted. There was the famous Sisi, the Roumanian, wth the dark eyes and the rouged cheeks, the queen of all the models. There was Dick, the girl with an eye-glass whose hair had been cut off as closely as a machine could cut it. There was the fair-haired bespectacled German drinking his demi-litre of beer. There was the Dutch poet, heavy jowled, melancholy, silent, and his immense wife. There was Hanley Histro, who carefully cultivated the reputation of being the wickedest man alive and recounted adventures that would have made Casanova blush. There was Maggie Mellite, who had divorced four millionaire husbands and had the most entertaining fund of anecdotes, most of them scabrous, relating to celebrities she had known from King Edward and Teddy Roosevelt downwards. There was Kinning, whose nationality was unknown, but who carved frightful figures in wood after the manner of the natives of

Central Africa. There was a group of Norwegians who had lately arrived in Montparnasse. There was Marcel Printemps who had founded a revue in which to utter the foulest abuse of his enemies—who were numerous, and with whom he was constantly fighting to the scandal of the Café. There was the defrocked priest whose name was still in the newspapers. There was Dinwoody, the writer of verse who was addicted to opium and had to be shut up for long periods. There was the highly paid illustrator for the Hearst magazines, who was taking a long holiday in Europe. There was a table at which Italians were fiercely gesticulating. There was another at which Ortiz, the Spaniard, who manipulated pigment like clay, was expounding his views to his compatriots. Well-known men, like Augustus John, with his beautiful head, and Nevinson, of the faun's face, were sometimes to be seen; the Coupole was the rendezvous of all American or English artists passing through Paris. Arabs and Syrians and Egyptians were scattered on the terrace. There was a Russian in Cossack costume.

There were Cubans and Brazilians and Argentinians. There were Chinese with their almond-shaped eyes and there was Foujita, the Japanese painter, his straight black hair combed down to his eyebrows. There were Turks and Armenians and Greeks and Yugo-Slavians and Czecho-Slovakians and Lithuanians and Danes and Belgians—oh, they came from every clime and all were at home here, and once they had tasted the life of the Quarter, they were never content to remain away long.

The nostalgia of Montparnasse—who that has lingered long at the Coupole has not experienced that nostalgia? It is possible to hold divergent opinions of the district—to hold it to be iniquitous, parasitical, lazy, morbid, foolish, or to hold it to be laborious, virtuous, healthy, wise; to contend that great dreams are being dreamed there, great tasks being accomplished, great things being prepared, or to contend that it is there that art is running into the muddy wastes, the marshland of extinction. But it is not possible to escape from its spell if once it has taken you.

Certainly it was not possible for Haveling, who had watched generation succeed generation—there is a fresh generation every two years, though there is also a permanent colony to which Haveling belonged—and had seen men and women degenerate or flourish in this strange soil. He knew them all, these men and women in various stages of expansion or decay. He knew their poverty, their struggles, their hopes, their pettiness, their nobility, their vapidity or their value. He knew how they helped each other in their misery. He knew their disappointments, their unexpected good fortune. In the café itself were hung specimens of their works. Horrible daubs they were, for the most part—how could it be otherwise? Genius is not to be found in every bare studio, and for every artist worth while there must be a hundred who are worthless—but here and there was a tableau of exceptional talent. Into this picture gallery in the café came an occasional purchaser, and often an artist in despair not knowing where he was to find his next meal entered the café gloomily, to be informed, to his astonishment, that

his picture which had hung there for months had been sold. Was it surprising that he should invite his friends to jubilate with him and should impoverish himself in a single night?

Others without understanding might rail, but Haveling, though not blind to the faults of the frequenters of the Coupole, could not but be indulgent to them. He was known for his perpetual acts of kindness, though he tried to do good by stealth. Slender as his means were, he could not resist the charitable impulse that the distress of the painters often awakened.

He did not want to be disturbed this night. He wanted to sit out on the terrace enjoying the cool of the Boulevard, thinking of Emilie, whom he had just left, after an interview which would make that date the most notable date in his life. His life hitherto had been simple; now he would have to plan a totally different future. He had not considered himself as a marrying man; now he was transformed and would hasten the day when he should set up a ménage with Emilie. Would it mean surren-

dering the Bohemian habits he had contracted in the Quarter? He trusted not; he saw no reason why he should say farewell to everything that had made existence charming for him.

He had a small apartment on the Boulevard Raspail, with an old servant who kept his household in order; and grumbled unceasingly and amusingly at his irregular ways. But he took most of his meals in a tiny restaurant of Montparnasse. It was charming to be surrounded by the babble and to hear day after day the gossip of what was in reality a village, in which everybody knew everybody else, and was not ignorant of the smallest happening affecting his neighbour. Chez Marguerite was the name of the restaurant and Marguerite was the name of the woman who had waited on artists as far back as the memory of man went. She was indefatigable; arising every morning at the earliest hour and making her marketing in Les Halles; cooking and cleaning and serving without assistance of any kind. It was a mystery how she could manage to make ends meet; her prices were ridiculous. More-

over, she would extend credit; and nobody failed to pay her eventually; to cheat her would be dishonourable. The artists were grateful to her and adorned her walls with their designs. If I were to tell you the names of the men who had signed their drawings and their paintings on her walls I would be compiling a list of the most illustrious painters of the past thirty years. If Marguerite was poor, there was a gigantic fortune in that eating-place. Recently an American merchant offered her an enormous sum of money to be allowed to remove with scientific care the precious walls; Marguerite, needless to say, refused with scorn and indignation. She had no knowledge of the commercial value of these pictures, but she had the most acute knowledge of their sentimental value to her. Here was the record of her clients. . . .

Yes, he would sadly miss Marguerite and her clients if his marriage with Emilie meant a change of life for him. He wondered whether Emilie would like Marie, his old servant. Marie could hardly be persuaded to leave the house in which she had been a

servant for forty years. She had not always been in the apartment which Richard occupied, but she had always been in one or other of the apartments of the house. She was like a cat in her affection for the domicile in which she had begun her service. Richard would want a larger flat, and he was doubtful whether Marie would consent to accompany them. That would be a pity, her foolish fidelity, not to him, but to the house. She knew of him precisely what a servant should know and he was accustomed to her foibles. She entertained him with her quaint comments. One day she had said when he was putting up an etching of Notre Dame, "Why do people waste their time drawing Notre Dame when they can buy a picture postcard for two sous?" He found this really excellent art criticism. . . .

What a revolution it would be to be married! Could he remain a habitué of the Coupole? He doubted it. Well, every state of life had its inconveniences. He must accept them without regret, for would they not be vastly overweighed by the delights of an interior over which Emilie would preside?

He found himself choosing the colour of the wall-paper and deciding what kind of curtains he would like. He hoped Emilie would agree to hangings of Karamanie. There should be lots of tapestry. As for the furniture; he would purchase the sculptured tables of Louis Treize and the comfortable armchairs of the period in which the Musketeers might have sat. Whatever might be said about modern art, ancient furniture appealed to him. It was all very well to live in one's age, but that was no reason why one should not have the best of previous ages. He had seen only a week ago a wonderful bahut three hundred years old, the wood beautifully polished with the rich gloss of time that could not be imitated. Perhaps it was still for sale. He must look to-morrow in the antique shop. . . .

But, after all, what did he know of Emilie's taste? It might be altogether different from his own. Still, he could not believe that. They were sure to be in perfect accord. He would like a good deal of brass work and dull red copper. There might be copies of the statuary in the Louvre. The

Headless Victory, of course. The Venus of Milo, certainly. There was, too, a malicious head of Voltaire by Houdon, positively alive, which he had noticed among the plaster casts of the shop on the Boulevard Montparnasse. Some Tanagras also. . . .

Thus he began to plan the whole arrangement of the interior. But would it be easy to find a suitable apartment? Houseroom was scarce in Paris. He had friends who had been searching for accommodation for years. That was surely because they had not given themselves much trouble. It was not so difficult as they would have him believe. . . . Well, he could wait, but he trusted he would not have to wait long. At any rate. . . .

Of course it was impossible that he could sit on the terrace of the Coupole without being greeted. F. Medwin Fall, who had been holding forth on literature to a company of his collaborators to the *Revue Framereng*—the title was a compound of France, America, England—sitting on the bench like a veritable Prince of Letters holding his court, approached him. "How is

the Banquet to Bibi progressing?" he asked. "Has the statue been put up yet? That will be a farce worthy of the pre-war days."

In point of fact, Haveling had not thought of the preparations for the joyous fête with which he was charged, since the meeting at morn on the bridge with Henri Quatre. "Nothing more has been done," he answered, "but there is little more to be done."

Others joined them, and Mr. Paname was unable to pursue his plans for the furnishing of the flat that he already saw in his mind's eye, in which he and Emilie were to make their home. It might be that he need not give up altogether his habits; surely they could stay in the Quarter, and surely Emilie would accompany him sometimes to the Coupole. But his nocturnal ramblings—they would be impossible. He listened distractedly to his friends; he barely replied to them. Should he announce his engagement immediately? He was strongly tempted to do this; it would be clinching the matter; but he decided he had better wait.

A sweetmeat merchant in white, with a pleated cook's cap, brought his wares on a

tray; walnuts in sugar, Turkish delight, grapes embedded in toffee, figs with a caramel coating, nougat, almond cake—a luscious pile. Richard bought a selection of the bon-bons for the whole company. . . . How good was the smell of the acacias, how good was the sight and sound of the Boulevard, how good was life. . . .

CHAPTER XII

INSTEAD OF BLANK PAGES OR ROWS OF DOTS

IN the days that succeeded these events there was little outward change in the life of Richard. He felt a new zest, was interested still more in all that went on around him, found the trees greener, and Paris gayer, and the people he met more vividly picturesque. He was like a man who thought he saw clearly but who, on the advice of an optician, had tried on a pair of spectacles and was amazed at the fresh colour, the sharp outline of objects which had previously been blurred. He took an intenser delight in everything. He repeated to himself constantly Robert Louis Stevenson's lines:

The world is so full of a number of things
I am sure we should all be as happy as kings.

First he had to explain to Emilie's uncle. Henry Roi, when he called on him in the

rue de La Harpe, was surprised, but he was more surprised at the announcement Richard made. "It is not for me to say no if Emilie consents," he replied to Richard. "Nor have I any desire to oppose a refusal. I cannot understand the rapidity with which you have become enamoured of her, and I cannot understand the precipitation with which she has given you her promise. Perhaps I am too old to comprehend. But no matter: you and I are friends of hardly longer date, yet I trust you and like you. It is odd, is it not, that our interests are the same? I rejoice in it because we shall be able to help each other. If I may say so, in all modesty, my knowledge of Henri Quatre is probably deeper than yours—I have given my attention to his epoch unreservedly for over thirty years—and I may be of assistance to you in the preparation of your thesis. That will give me pleasure; more pleasure than anything else. But no, I must not put my historical interest before the interest of Emilie. It is the conviction that she will have far better protection than I could give her, which is my predominant thought. I

am getting old—older than my years—for the life of the scholar in our days is not easy. There are no longer patrons—or, rather, such as there are are men like Rhobert, who is chiefly concerned with a fancy that I am now sorry I ever indulged, since he takes advantage of my poverty to turn it to his own uses. I have been a child in his hands. I ask myself whether I should not now decline to go on with the Cabaret. I would never have done so except for the sake of Emilie. Do you desire that she should exhibit herself? If you do not, let us break with Rhobert at once."

"It is not my desire which must prevail," said Richard. "It is the desire of Emilie. We have discussed this matter. I am persuaded that she would regret losing an opportunity of demonstrating her conception of the Dance in such favourable circumstances. My own inclination, like yours, would be to break with Rhobert, but I should reproach myself afterwards were I to interfere with a career which must be glorious. It would not be fair to her. The real objection lies precisely, as it seems to me,

in the character of Rhobert, who has plainly shown that he believes himself to be her master because he has provided her with a platform and a public."

"I would kill him, like a dog," threatened Henri Roi, "if he molested Emilie."

"That is why," went on Richard, "it occurs to me that it would be well if, while awaiting our marriage, you and she were to permit me to act as an intermediary. The advantages. . . ."

"Yes, I see the advantages," broke in Henri Roi, "and, for my part, acknowledge that I am scarcely competent to interpose myself as a business man between Rhobert and Emilie."

"I have comparatively little to do," said Richard, "and I should be gratified if you would entrust your affairs—the affairs of both of you—to me. I suppose you have not even entered into a contract with Rhobert—you are relying on verbal promises."

"That is it," admitted the uncle. "I should not have known what to demand."

"Exactly; and if the Cabaret succeeds Rhobert will immediately make you sign a

document which will bind Emilie to him for years on advantageous terms to himself. If it should fail, you have nothing."

"I give you carte blanche," cried the old man. They shook hands on this understanding, and Richard, after a visit to a lawyer with Henri Roi and Emilie, found himself converted by power of attorney from a Sentimental Observer into a Business Man.

It was armed with this authority that he paid his visit to André Rhobert. The interview was stormy. "I have no wish to see you," Rhobert protested. "After what passed between us the other night, I am staggered at your impudence in coming here. We can have nothing to say to each other—unless you have come to explain why Emilie left my studio suddenly. I suspect that you are not a stranger to her desertion of the party."

"It was I who took her away," said Richard suavely.

"And you dare to boast of it to me," thundered Rhobert. "In that case, we have an account to settle. I warned you not to inter-

fere with her. By what right do you come between us?"

"Oh, I have every right," announced Richard. "First, I have the honour to inform you that she is engaged to marry me, and I return your warning—if you interfere with her you will have to reckon with me. In the second place I am, as these papers will show, her manager, and your relations with her in future will be through me."

Rhobert was furious. For two minutes by the watch he vented his wrath on Richard, on Henri Roi, on Emilie. "It is incredible," he burst out, "but if it is true, you can all go to the devil. Clear out of my house instantly or I will not answer for myself."

"As to that," returned Richard sweetly, "if you attempt any violence you will meet your match. But it would be better if you were to consider the case calmly. I have no intention of being unfair to you. You have launched Emilie with extraordinary ability on the turbulent sea of Parisian notoriety. Unless you behave in an impossible manner, you are entitled to reap your reward. You will, I am sure, listen to reason,

but if you will not the consequences are very simple: neither Emilie nor Henri Roi will appear in your Cabaret."

"Will not appear! But—but——" He became speechless.

"Consider the position for a moment," said Richard calmly. "There is at present no contract, and your plans can be upset as we please. I recognise that we should be treating you badly if we walked out on you, and therefore come to make a business proposal. Will you listen? If not"—and he took up his hat.

"But Emilie is set on appearing," argued Rhobert, who began to appreciate the disadvantage at which he was placed. "She would not abandon this chance. It is not merely a chance of earning money, of becoming famous, but a chance—and this is her principal motive—of demonstrating her theory and displaying her art."

"You have already," retorted Richard, "arrived, I am sure, at this conclusion: if she is deprived of your scene I can easily furnish her another. The Parisian public would be keener than ever to see her. She has

therefore full freedom of choice. Besides, if the truth be told, I would prefer that she should renounce her dancing altogether. I cannot, however, ask her to do that. Nor can I ask you, while you remain in your artistic rôle, to give up your vedette. I only point out to you that she is no way bound to you, and if you wish to retain her, you will be good enough to sign these papers, and understand that in future any offensive behaviour on your part will be fittingly punished."

The dispute lasted for some time longer, but in the end there was nothing for it but to accept the conditions offered by Richard —conditions which provided for specific remuneration for a limited engagement.

Richard had scored the first hit in the duel.

He was preparing to go when Fanny Fulger, radiant in a toilette of pink organdi, burst into the room. "I thought you were alone," she said, apologetically, to Rhobert, and she held out her hand to Richard.

"I came," intimated Richard, "to tell M. Rhobert of my engagement to Emilie Renaud."

"How delightful!" gaily responded Fanny, who was genuinely pleased that her rival should be removed from her path. "I am sure we both extend to you our heartiest congratulations, do we not, André?"

"Naturally," replied Rhobert, with a sour face. "My congratulations, Mr. Paname!"

Mr. Paname had reason to be satisfied with his day's work. It was not, however, ended. He visited the offices of the *Moniteur Parisien* on the Boulevard des Italiens. "Splendid!" M. Grosjean chirruped, between two naps. "I have no objection to women in the home or in the theatre. It is only when they ask for the vote that they find me opposed to them. We will certainly have a little article written. Arsène is the man to do it."

So Arsène Le Duc, black beard and all, was introduced into the cabinet of the Director and, his professional instincts aroused, plied Richard with questions and promised a nouvelle in the true Parisian note.

"I have an old friend of yours in my room," he added. "Do you remember Aristide the Goatherd whom you met on the way

to the Chat Qui Fume? I asked him to call on me and I am going to write him up."

Did Richard remember? Why, the Goatherd was at the very beginning of his romance. They passed through a long room with bare boards arranged on trestles around which sat several colleagues of Arsène. They were busy writing copy or editing the official reports of the Parliamentary debates of that day, or reading through the feuilles of Radio and of Havas; crumpling most of them in their hands and throwing them on the floor.

A pile of telegrams was being worked over by a weary man whose business it was to put in the "ofs" and the "thes" and the "a's" that had been omitted by the local correspondents for the sake of economy. The newspapers of the afternoon were being studied and paragraphs were being clipped out by huge pairs of scissors. Everybody was too busy to look up as Arsène and Richard entered—except a fidgety sub-editor at the head of the table who was responsible for the make-up of the paper.

"Has not the patron finished his leading

article yet?" he plaintively asked Arsène. "Don't you know how much it will make?"

"I know he has started it," answered Arsène. "If he does not finish it before dinner, I will put the final touches to it. You are always too anxious."

"One must know what is coming in good time," remarked the worried sub-editor. "What are you doing?"

"Oh, I shall have half a column for the front page about Aristide the Goatherd," responded Arsène, "and probably two sticks about Mr. Paname's engagement with Emilie Renaud. You shall have it all in three-quarters of an hour. Anyhow, you know just what space to keep open."

"Mr. Paname can go on the second page, can't he?"

"No; you must find a corner for him, perhaps under the leader of the patron. It will be a good scoop, and both Emilie and Mr. Paname are figures of Paris.

The sight of Aristide the Goatherd was refreshing to Richard. Aristide sat awkwardly in the broken armchair drawn up to the tiny desk of Arsène in the dusty paper-

littered room which had been allotted to the bright particular star of the paper. He was twisting his béret nervously in his hand. He was at home on the mountains, but he had never been at home in Paris, and least of all was he at home in this haunt of publicity. The room was scarcely big enough to contain the three men. Aristide shambled to his feet.

"I am glad to shake you by the hand," Richard assured him. "Your bowl of milk near the Pont Neuf brought me good luck."

"And to me it brought good luck," returned Aristide, with the natural courtesy and polite turn of expression of the Frenchman, however humble. "It was the first bowl I sold on the first morning in Paris."

"You shall be invited to my wedding. Do you know that you are a match-maker? Do you know that you and the flower woman in Les Halles have determined the course of my life? In return I have a good mind to arrange a marriage between you and the flower woman!"

"That would also be a Parisian event," assented Arsène, with his nose for news.

Richard missed Tom Quickly, who lived on the topmost heights of Montmartre, and he did not call at the *New York Argus*. But on his way back to the Latin Quarter he met M. Lepic, to whom he conveyed the news. M. Lepic twinkled. He threw up his sharp face with the sharp white beard. "Excellent! You will now have to change your habits; no more nocturnal wanderings! And I shall be able to rectify your dossier."

Richard laughed. "Oh, for that, perhaps I shall be allowed out occasionally."

He met, too, Professor Pelle, and heard from him that the date of his oral examination for the Doctorate was fixed and that he would have to sustain his thesis before Professor Pelle. "I trust you will be compassionate," implored Haveling, facetiously. "It would be interesting to be made a Doctor and to be married at the same time."

He wanted now to spread the news as rapidly as possible. In the Luxembourg Gardens he had another occasion to speak of his engagement. There was Georges Jouvence with the three girls, Suzy, Paulette, and

Lisa. "We are expecting Arsène and Tom," Georges explained.

"I did not suppose you had turned Mormon or Mohammedan," bantered Richard, "though one would be tempted by your company. Tell Tom that I am to be married to Emilie."

What a merry commotion among the girls! They had never heard anything half as astounding, half as pleasing, in their lives. They seized him by the lapel, they clung to his arms, begging for particulars. Suzy and Paulette were so effusive that Lisa was obliged to rebuke them. Their "ahs!" and "Ohs!" and their cries of "Impossible!" and of "Is it true?" and of "Incredible!" and of "Truly?" were multiplied to infinity, and Richard left them giggling and exclaiming and flinging up their hands in the prettiest fashion.

The Count Abélard Costi de la Brière took it more philosophically. Bibi-la-Bohème was feeding his birds and merely remarked, with deep solemnity: "I am not unprepared. It is in the nature of things. The marrying habit is one of the proofs that we

are descended from frogs. I have already demonstrated it."

"Apropos," said Richard. "Do you know that it is on Sunday next week that you are to be our honoured guest at the banquet where we are to convey a fresh title on you and unveil your statue?"

Bibi had heard of it. "There are few living men who have their statues in Paris," he answered. "All the dead men are in effigy and there is no honour in that—but living—it is a distinction that can be accepted with pride."

Richard regretted the part he was taking in the inauguration of the statue. He had not counted on Abélard regarding the matter as anything but a joke to which he would lend himself willingly.

He found no acquaintance at the Closerie des Lilas, before which stood Marshal Ney waving his sword. But when he came in sight of the Coupole he was aware that he had arrived too late with the news. F. Medwin Fall was humming a bridal march and the others broke into cheers.

"Then you know?" he queried.

Dollard, who had, after Oxford, visited the Quarter twenty-five years ago, intending to stay a week and had remained ever since, though announcing his departure for the following week whenever reminded of his long residence, flourished the afternoon edition of the *New York Argus*.

"It's in the paper," he shouted.

"How on earth did Tom Quickly find out?" Richard Haveling demanded.

He read as follows:—

"No event on the Left Bank in recent years will give so much pleasure to the members of the Colony as the announcement we are now able exclusively to make of the approaching marriage of our distinguished confrère, Mr. Richard Haveling, known to Parisians as Mr. Paname, to Mademoiselle Emilie Renaud, the dancer, who is preparing an artistic surprise for us, and who has sprung to fame on the mere rumour of her engagement to appear at the Cabaret of the Alchemists in the Latin Quarter. The popular figure of Mr. Haveling. . . ."

"You must bring her here and let us look at her," said Dollard.

The enthusiasm presently subsided and Richard was ready to listen to the other gossip. It appeared that the *Framereng* was about to suspend publication, but it would be replaced, always under the editorship of F. Medwin Fall, by another review to be called *Amerfrang*. The collaborators would be the same. Only the cover would be changed. It appeared also that a Bal Musette behind the Panthéon had been taken over on Thursday nights and would be the rendezvous of artists and writers. It appeared that there was some hope of the Club, of which there had been much talk, being founded at last, though it was hotly disputed whether ladies should be admitted to membership or admitted as guests. It appeared—and this was a piece of news of which they spoke softly and sadly—that Modrillo had been found dead in his studio, and that there was no doubt he had died of starvation. A dealer had bought twenty tableaux from his wife for ten thousand francs. "He will sell them for a hundred

thousand to an American buyer," asserted Dollard. "Just think what ten thousand would have meant to him." But it was one of the tragedies of Montparnasse, and it would not do to dwell upon it too long.

The next day Richard took Emilie with him to Chez Marguerite and afterwards to the Coupole, though he promised himself that their visits should be short and far between, as angels' visits should be. He was happy to see that Emilie was entertained by the novelty of the life of the Montparnassians, with whom she had not mingled, though she dwelt in the Hotel de la Montagne.

CHAPTER XIII

SIX OF THEM IN A TREE-TOP

TOM QUICKLY and Paulette had resolved to be alone. They liked the company of Georges and Arsène and Lisa and Suzy well enough, but serious lovemaking is not possible in a society of six. That one or other of the couples would revolt against the convention of the Luxembourg Gardens was inevitable. It might have been expected that Lisa, the gravest of the three girls, would have been the first to break away, especially as Arsène was the most impatient of the three men, and had, on several occasions, openly expressed his discontent at the tacit arrangement which had been made. But, in fact, Lisa had a sense of duty. She was almost maternal. She felt herself to be, at least in part, responsible for Suzy, who was entirely devoid of self-restraint. If she was left alone she would tease

Georges unmercifully and a rupture would be certain. Even Paulette had, thought Lisa, little practical knowledge of life. Both of them therefore needed her, and Lisa, though she had tired of the perpetual presence of her companions, had for a long time sacrificed herself. The temptation of escaping from the sextette had, it must be confessed, hardly occurred to Suzy, who was perfectly content to possess Georges in a crowd. It was rather odd that Paulette should have taken the bold course of breaking up the association and that she should now find herself in the tree-top of Fontenay-Robinson with Tom. It was a fine Sunday, and it was foolish of them to hope that they could remain undisturbed in their nest on the topmost branches of the chestnut-tree. Yet they were indeed foolish enough to cherish that hope. Had not Tom given five francs to the waiter who had conducted them up the narrow trembling ladder into the tiny box of wood and wicker-work hidden in the luxurious foliage? They had commanded for their déjeûner river-trout that would be caught for them in the brook that babbled

through the village and a chicken which was, unconscious of its fate, still picking up grain in the farmyard. The waiter had assured them that, as far as possible, they would be left to take their meal in a solitude of two. But he was not, he said, wagging his head, to be blamed if other couples insisted on a place in the tree-top. To be sure, there were a score of restaurants swaying in the wind, but Parisians had learned the way to Fontenay-Robinson, and many of them preferred to climb to the nooks of wood and wicker-work rather than make an orthodox repast on terra-firma. Nevertheless, he would do his best; more than that Napoleon himself could not do. They were impressed by his manner and believed him to be a strategist to whom Napoleon himself would have lost points.

Paulette clapped her hands merrily in triumph. Could there be anything more romantic than to be perched up there right against the sky on the top of a tall chestnut-tree! They peeped down. About them was a restless sea of green rippling and rolling and breaking into sudden waves in the wind.

It made a noise like the sea. Further down smaller trees ruffled their summits and yet lower was the shrubbery of the garden with its green carpet on which were scattered here and there parties refreshing themselves after the journey from the city. The bushy tail of a squirrel emerged from the chaos of verdure, and as Paulette pointed, the little animal, glancing at them mischievously, scurried out of sight.

There could not be a happier cadre for an amorous pair than among the branches of this venerable chestnut-tree. It was much more than bucolic; it was primitive, aboriginal, prehistoric. Before man had begun to scratch the soil, before man had made dwelling-places of caves, his ancestors had gaily lived their lives among the leaves. Perhaps the true paradise was somewhere between the earth and the heavens. Why had man ever descended to the ground and become of the earth, earthy? The instinct of those who had endeavoured to build a tower which should scale the skies was right, and they had been unfortunate in offending the Deity. The ladder which had led Tom and Paulette

to the tree-top was for them a sort of Jacob's Ladder. The architects of New York who had built sky-scrapers—what a wonderfully poetic description!—were proceeding on the right lines—perpendicular lines, upwards, ever upwards. Tom Quickly at home occupied rooms on the Butte of Montmartre which gave him a view over the whole city and he felt himself to be on a private Olympia and to be a god because he was above the world. Were not the sublime thoughts of Teufelsdrockh, as edited by Carlyle, conceived in the attic from which he gazed downwards on the fermenting vat of humanity, sitting above it all, alone with the stars? Nay, it was not—to cast one's fancy higher still—in an Upper Room that the disciples were congregated when the Holy Spirit came down to them in tongues of fire? . . .

But here there was not only height, but cleanness—the cleanness of wind-swept spaces, the cleanness of the skies, the cleanness of tree-tops. . . . Tom began to be meditative and tried to express something of his feelings to Paulette, who did not in the least understand. What she understood was that

they were holiday-making as they could not holiday-make in town, that they were remote from workaday things; that they were sharing the life of the birds and beasts of the trees and of the air.

"Would it not be glorious," she said, "if we could always stay up here, just we two together in a little nest?"

"And somebody to bring us trout whenever we call for them," replied Tom, suddenly growing practical. "It would be expensive simplicity. Besides, this box would be leaky if it rained, and it would be uncomfortable never to stretch our legs."

"But we could go down when we wanted and come back when we chose. Would it not be fun to build a real house in the trees? Some day we must."

"Ah, well, some day—some day never comes, so I will promise you whatever you want for some day."

Tom could not refrain from singing for long, and there in the branches he sang:

Jock and Jenny are gone to the Fair,
Jock gives Jenny a penny to wear;

She wears it up and she wears it down,
And she wears it on a brown silk gown.

The people on the ground stared upwards trying to catch a glimpse of the owner of the voice among the clouds.

But there were voices close to Tom and Paulette. The cage shook as newcomers climbed the ladder. Tom and Paulette looked at each other dolefully. Was their déjeûner to be spoiled, after all?

"There's room here," the waiter was saying. "I cannot put you alone—you should have come earlier. But it's only a couple like yourselves that's there. I promised to leave them alone, but as you insist, it can't be helped."

Tom listened and recognised the voice that replied: "Well, we won't interfere with each other. Better to have strangers for company than friends, don't you think so?"

"Especially when you are with the same friends every day," returned a feminine voice.

Paulette cried out in astonishment as the head of Arsène appeared in the opening. Be-

hind him, on a lower rung, was Lisa, whose head the next moment overtopped the floor.

Arsène and Lisa were no less startled at the presence of Tom and Paulette than Tom and Paulette were startled at the presence of Arsène and Lisa. Arsène recovered himself first. "So you are trying to run away from us!" he asked.

"And you from us!" replied Tom.

"In running away from each other we have run into each other's arms. Well, we must make the best of it. Have you ordered lunch yet?"

"Yes, but it can be held back until yours is ready," said Tom, accordingly giving orders to the waiter, who was overcome with emotion at the blunder he had apparently made.

"What brought you here?" Paulette questioned Lisa.

"Why, the train, of course, as I presume it brought you."

"That is where you are wrong. We took the early morning tramcar to Sceaux. But, I mean, how did you know we were here?"

"We did not know, but we heard you plan-

ning to slip away from us to-day and we thought we would have a tête-à-tête of our own."

"And Suzy? And Georges?"

"How should I know? Probably they have conspired against us, too. At any rate, they were not in the Luxembourg this morning."

"So we are doomed to remain together," declared Tom. "When Paulette and I think of slipping away, you have precisely the same thought and we come into collision!"

"But it was you and Paulette who plotted first," protested Arsène.

"What a pity," cried Lisa, "that Suzy is not with us, since things have fallen out thus!"

It was generally agreed that if they were to be a quartette they might just as well be a sextette. They regretted the absence of their comrades, but they were beginning to be convivial when there was a fresh complication. The waiter appeared once more with an apologetic air.

"I am ashamed of myself," he exclaimed. "I experience a veritable desolation. It will

be impossible for me to forgive myself, and I cannot hope for your forgiveness. But I am bound to confess that there is still room for two persons at the table, and my hard-hearted employer, who is altogether without sentiment, has at this precise minute given these two places to two persons who have arrived and who desire to lunch in the chestnut-tree. I can do nothing against this decision. I realise how greatly you are incommoded. I would not have had this happen for anything. But what can I do! It is not for me to resist the formal instructions of my unimaginative employer."

He made a profound obeisance. The faces of the four fell. The place was small, and to have strangers thrust upon them was truly unpleasant. They would prefer to eat, after all, in the garden.

But before they could make up their minds, Georges and Suzy burst in upon them. The waiter who had affected a perturbation which was professional, was amazed to observe that the new couple was also acquainted with the party in the tree. This was incredible. That it should have happened

once that morning was possible, but that it should happen twice was, to use the French term, an exaggeration.

The consternation of Georges and Suzy thus discovered, as they thought, in an intrigue against the others, was at first painful. They stood crestfallen. Arsène humorously reproached them.

"But this is disgraceful," he asserted, "to enter into a cabal against us! Why were you not at the Luxembourg? Because you were inventing treason. Because you were contriving a machination. Because you had determined to desert us. But you are properly punished. You dig your pit and fall into it yourselves."

Georges was too confused to defend himself. "It is unfortunate, it is unfortunate," he repeated.

Suzy was bolder. "It is not our fault," she protested. "We planned nothing. We did go to the Luxembourg and could not find you. So we thought it would be no harm to take the train out of Paris. I believe," she went on hotly, "if the truth be told, that you deliberately dodged us."

Tom could not stand out against the pathetic appeal of Georges' expression.

"Let us all confess," he suggested. "Paulette and I wanted to avoid Lisa and Arsène and Suzy and Georges for one day. Lisa and Arsène wanted to avoid Suzy and Georges and Paulette and me for one day. Suzy and Georges wanted to avoid Paulette and me and Lisa and Arsène for one day. But we have all run into the same haven of refuge, which happens to be among the tree-tops. None of us is displeased at the unexpected meeting. We are, on the contrary, glad that our complots have collapsed."

"Would anybody believe," demanded Paulette, "that coincidence could be piled on coincidence to this point?"

"It is because," said Lisa, "we are predestined to remain together." And her explanation, though it was simply a repetition of the terms of the problem, was as good as explanations of scientists, of philosophers, and of diplomatists usually are.

"If it is like this," put in Suzy, "would it not be better to set up a single household

together, resigning ourselves to a preordained comradeship?"

The idea was found excellent and was greeted with cheers and laughter. "At least," said Tom, "let us begin our ménage of six to-day in the tree-tops. Make ready, garçon, two more trout!"

The trout were everything that trout should be. The chicken was better than chicken can possibly be. The nest in the chestnut branches rocked them; the wind ruffled the sea of green and sang more light-hearted songs than Tom himself could sing —though Tom, too, added his voice to the voice of the wind. If the girls could not find solemn thoughts in the sky, they could at least find merry thoughts, and perhaps merry thoughts are better than solemn thoughts.

Nor must one forget to chronicle among the events of this jolly day the participation of the six in the Sweethearts' Fair. The Sweethearts' Fair was held from time to time at various points of the periphery of Paris. It was held on the afternoon of this Sunday at Fontenay-Robinson. A tent was erected, and in it sat a Committee. Its function was

to give numbers to the young people who should demand them. The young people of both sexes registered, under their number in the records of the Committee, particulars of themselves and a description of the kind of sweetheart they would like. Whenever the description of one tallied with the particulars of another, a Committeeman, at the request of one of the persons, would present them to each other. The etiquette of the ceremony was strict.

"Suppose we become strangers for a while," proposed Tom, "and are presented to each other?"

It was silly, but it was amusing. One by one they wrote down their preferences. Suzy had no hesitation in describing herself as red-haired and freckled. There were those who would have used euphemisms, but not Suzy. It was more difficult to describe Georges, but she did not flatter him. The Committeeman stared at her as she put in black and white her penchant for someone who should not be too young, might even be bald. Georges followed her demanding a rousse, in whom plumpness would not be an objection.

"But there is the very thing," exclaimed the Committeeman. "Mademoiselle, who has just gone out, and you, will suit each other perfectly." And he ran to overtake Suzy who for once stopped herself from giggling as she was introduced to Georges. Perhaps she was conscious that the formality of registering her tastes in fiancés was a much more serious promise than she had yet made —was altogether binding on them both.

Still, it was acknowledged that the introduction had been made too quickly. They were wrong, Georges and Suzy, to have entered together. It would be better were the others to go in at intervals. Paulette, the brunette, certainly described the red-bearded blue-eyed Tom, but Tom insisted that Arsène should follow her, and Arsène wrote that nobody but a tall blonde would suit him. This made it more difficult and, indeed the Committeeman wanted to introduce Paulette to a young man who was not, as she afterwards declared, the least like Tom. In the end, it fell out as they desired, and Arsène and Lisa and Tom and Paulette were

given as partners to each other by the energetic and obliging Committeeman.

How could they help seeing in this recognition by the Committee of their affinities a confirmation of their own choice? Certainly such coupling could not be ascribed to pure hazard. On the other hand, could it be argued that it was completely arranged? They would not deny that they had assisted ever so slightly the guiding hand of Destiny, but their assistance was not sufficient to account for the significant fact that the Committee at the Sweethearts' Fair had seen in them the partners of each other. What better proof of the rightness of their selection could be obtained? Was this not a convincing ratification?

They danced to the strains of accordeons on the grass. The village of Fontenay-Robinson was now filled with the throngs from Paris. Motor charabancs continued to pour in with their loads of merry-makers. It was not easy to find any secluded corner in which to repose themselves. They had need of repose, for they had danced the whole afternoon. Perhaps the best course was to

climb back into their tree in good time and order an early dinner. That is what they did. As the meal was served in the swaying nest with the rustling branches about them making a noise like the sea, Arsène gave them a toast:

"Vive le ménage à six!" he cried. "It has nothing of the ill-repute of the ménage à trois!"

They took up the toast simultaneously and then one by one: "Vive le ménage à six."

The sound of the leaves seemed to them to be an approbative response.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BATTLE OF THE WINDMILL

THAT was a Homeric battle at Montmartre about the windmill. Arsène had accompanied Tom on the return from Fontenay-Robinson, although he lived near the Etoile, because he had somehow heard of the intentions of the citizens of Montrouge. When they came upon the windmill, on the highest point of the hill, its arms spread out imploringly on the sky, the designs of the Montrougeois had already been detected, and there were men and women flying towards the spot where the windmill was in process of demolition. It was only a little windmill, perfectly transportable, and the men of Montrouge had brought with them a curious carriage on low wheels on which they proposed to haul the Moulin Radet across Paris and set it up in their own commune.

The dispute had been long and had become more and more animated as the months went by and no settlement was arrived at. The men of Montrouge had, according to their own showing, papers which proved that the Radet belonged to them. How, then, had it been erected at Montmartre? The Montmartrois replied that it had been erected on the hill because it was a Montmartre windmill. The fact was a sufficient refutation of the claims of Montrouge. The papers on which Montrouge relied were forgeries. They purported to be bills in the name of Radet of Montrouge. They contained specifications which corresponded to the height, the breadth, the circumference, of the Moulin. There was a legend, too, that many years ago Montmartre had swooped down on Montrouge and, in a wild foray, had carried off the windmill. To be sure, there was no authentic record of the exploit and Montmartre triumphantly asked why it should ever have cast envious eyes on a little structure at Montrouge when it was already so rich in windmills. In short, Montmartre laughed the case of Montrouge to scorn.

Then it was that Montrouge, peopled by a growing colony of artists, resolved on desperate measures. It came stealthily at night with its carriage on low wheels. The Paris policemen stared as this strange procession of Montrougeois carrying pikes and spades and pickaxes, traversed the Boulevards. For a moment they suspected the army of communistic projects, but on second thoughts they took them to be gangs of workmen proceeding to their task. So the cortège went unmolested up the slopes of Montmartre. The lower Montmartre was beginning to wake up as they dragged their contraption, like haulers of the Volga, towards the Place Pigalle. In all the adjacent streets red sky signs were ablaze. Taxicabs and private automobiles were setting down men and women in evening dress at the doors of illuminated dancing-halls where bad champagne was being sold at a hundred francs a bottle and cocaine at fifty francs a pinch. There were few Frenchmen among the clients of these resorts where the night was to be danced down. They came from the four corners of the earth to meet in the promis-

cuity of Montmartre—a cosmopolitan horde of pleasure-seekers who imagined that Paris was bounded on the north by the Boulevard de Clichy, on the south by the Place de la Trinité, on the east by the rue des Martyrs, on the west by the rue Blanche. Within this restricted area, known to the world as Montmartre, everything was permitted. Dypsomaniacs, dansomaniacs, sexomaniacs, toxicomaniacs, and perverts of all description, lived here and moved and had their being. Here, if anywhere, was the modern Babylon. But it was a particularly repugnant Babylon, squalid in spite of its lights, sordid in spite of its pleasures, disgusting in spite of its tragedies. It existed on its nerves. It was the abode of hysteria. Its state was pathological. Here was the neurosis of the universe.

It was not here that was the Montmartre which the men of Montrouge sought. It was beyond the Boulevards Extérieurs. They left the mournful victims of St. Vitus to their nocturnal dissipation and tugged their low-wheeled vehicle up the steep rues and before long they had arrived at the

countless steps which lead to the Sacré-Coeur, dominating with its white rotundities the city of Paris. The funicular railway, which takes people up to the elevated plateau, was no longer puffing and panting on its upward way. It had earned repose after its arduous and continuous climbing feats. Obviously, the conspirators could not mount their machine by way of the countless steps. They were obliged to make a detour and to come upon the other Montmartre by way of tortuous streets of tumbledown houses with waste land here and there—a primitive old village which was now asleep except for a few quaint dens like the Lapin Agile, where poets drank their bocks and recited their verses, while the animateur, a hale Montmartrois of incredible age, smoked his pipe or twanged his mandoline to the songs of Béranger.

Old Montmartre is truly a village, not easily accessible, remote from the noisy city which lies below. The Place du Tertre is its centre—an unpaved square with stone benches and a few trees, surrounded by ancient buildings, yellow and red, placid and

picturesque. One could stretch out one's hands and touch the walls on either side of the twining and declivitous streets. The shops and the restaurants have kept a simplicity which is rare. By the oriental temple of the Sacré-Coeur scapulars and chaplets and other religious symbols are sold. There are smoky boutiques in which pictures are piled. Willows throw their wealth of foliage protectingly over the low houses. Amorous couples stroll slowly in the shadows. The gas lamps cast a feeble yellow light. The foreign artists congregate at Montparnasse, but the poorer French artists are still faithful to old Montmartre, where they are at home in the ill-repaired ateliers and in the ill-kept gardens. These artists do not often descend to the town. They regard Paris as a far-off place, as though they inhabited the tranquil provinces. They have elected their own Mayor—a mock Mayor, if you please, but a Mayor whose principal duty it is to organise innocent entertainments. The Garde-Champêtre, in his blue smock and three-cornered hat, carries a long staff, the emblem of his authority, but is prepared to drink a glass

with anybody who will offer it. There is a Herald dressed in nondescript attire which vaguely resembles that of a Roman soldier, who goes through the streets blowing a trumpet announcing with a fanfare the fêtes which have been promoted by the Mayor sitting in his battered tall hat with his Councillors.

To-night both the Garde-Champêtre and the Herald were abroad. They were announcing a surprise attack on the Moulin. In a stentorian voice the Garde-Champêtre was calling upon all good citizens to leave their beds and to rush to the rescue of the Radet. The trumpet of the Herald was shattering the calm night with a ferocious fanfare. The Mayor, setting a noble example, was while awaiting reinforcements, haranguing the men of Montrouge who had made this surreptitious irruption. Even in his haste he had not forgotten his battered tall hat, and his dignity was immense as he began pourparlers. The men of Montrouge were adamant. They worked feverishly at the dismantlement of the windmill, hoping that although the alarm was given their raid

would still be carried to a successful issue. If once they could get the structure on their low-wheeled cart, they believed they could hurry down the hill and reach the neutral territory of Paris proper before the bulk of the Montmartrois could catch them. In the Place Pigalle they would, they reckoned, be in comparative security, for the duty of the police would merely be to quell the fighting and not to take sides in the dispute for the windmill. It was an excellent calculation but, unfortunately, their plans had been put in jeopardy by the premature arrival of the Mayor, and they foresaw a veritable battle around the Radet, in which they stood a serious chance of being outnumbered.

Arsène and Tom were onlookers. It was not for them to plunge into the fray, though Tom considered himself to be a member of the community which was perched high above Paris. As a journalist he must be impartial. He was a war correspondent and not a combatant. The men of Montrouge had lit their lanterns, which cast a fitful illumination on the Radet and on the gangs of sappers who plied their pickaxes and their spades and

their pikes. They had thrown off their coats. They had neglected to put on their shirts, realising the seriousness of their task. The muscles of their arms and of their bare backs, as they were bent to their job, glistened in the lantern light.

"They will be in time," prophesied Arsène, as he saw the progress they were making. "The warriors of Montmartre will not be mustered till it is too late."

Tom's sympathies were stirred. "I will bet you—I will bet you six dinners," he said, "that the windmill does not leave Montmartre."

"Done! Six dinners wherever you like! Here, at Montmartre, if you wish, next Sunday."

"Next Sunday there is the banquet to Bibi. Yes, I will pay for the six of us if the Montmartrois lose. You will be the host if the Montrougeois lose."

"We shall see. What is the good of the speech of the Mayor? Why does he not try to stop them?"

"What could he do against so many? Is it not enough that he should expose himself

personally? How many generals would be as bold?"

"Oh, there is no danger. A general would do as much in the circumstances."

"Well, here are mustering the defenders of the windmill. There will be enough of them to deliver battle before the Radet can be moved."

From their beds leapt the men and the women of Montmartre, resolved to make the enemy pay dearly for his temerity. They were in all stages of déshabillé. There were women clad in petticoats and bodices, their feet thrust into trailing slippers. There were others who had put a coat over their night-dress. There were even girls who had neglected this elementary precaution. The men had jumped into their trousers. There was in the village of Montmartre in every tortuous rue a picture of bodies strained forward and legs raised horizontally from the knees. All responded with alacrity to the call of the trumpet. They shook their heads like war horses. They scented the battle and rejoiced. Woe betide the men of Montrouge if they could not work faster!

But the conflict was not yet engaged. The Mayor, adjusting his battered hat, looked around and counted his forces. He was at last satisfied. He was ready to give the order for the charge that would scatter the Montrougeois as the Assyrians were scattered of old. He made a final appeal.

"Men of Montrouge," he clamoured, "before I let loose my trusty lieges on you—and I beg you to observe that there are ranged against you not only the men of Montmartre but, more terrible still, the women—I exhort you to cease your depredations. We are willing—we have always been willing—to submit the subject of our contention to arbitration, thus setting an example to greater nations. We are pacific and antimilitarist. But our patience must not be tried too far. If you persist, the consequences will be terrible. We have still windmills at Montmartre and we might have spared one for you had you appealed to our generosity, for we feel how hard it must be for artists to live without windmills to paint. But we cannot yield to violence, and we take up your chal-

lenge. If it is fighting you want, you shall have your fill."

There was an uproar of applause and the Montmartrois shook their fists valiantly at the Montrougeois. There was no response from the foe.

"One word more before the signal of strife is given," bellowed the Mayor. "I call the world to witness that you have committed an unprovoked aggression on our innocent commune. There is nothing for it but combat, and courage will not be lacking. It will not be lacking on our side and I doubt not that it will be shown on yours. But we want no unnecessary bloodshed. Just as poison gas is to be ruled out as a weapon of war, just as the dumdum bullet has long been discarded by civilised nations, it is for us now to make a convention that wounding instruments such as pikes and pickaxes and spades shall not be employed on either side. We make you a solemn promise that we will only use our bare fists. Do you make the same?"

The men of Montrouge had put on their coats. Since the struggle was inevitable,

they did not wish to lose their wearing apparel. There was no direct answer to the question of the Mayor, but apparently the Mayor was satisfied that the Montrougeois would behave loyally.

"May the best commune win!" cried the Mayor, convinced that numbers were now on his side. "Let the battalions advance!"

The Garde-Champêtre waved his staff, the Herald blew a dreadful blast on his trumpet, Tom and Arsène slipped nimbly from between the rival forces, and the onslaught commenced. How to tell the tale of this stricken field? It would tax the resources of the Greek poet himself to relate the deeds of prowess that were done, the rude assaults, the vigorous counter-attacks, the skill of the mass manœuvres, the glory of the individual encounters. It would be easy, indeed, to borrow a description from the *Iliad*, but it would be easier still to rely on the imagination of the reader. At least, one should record that in this battle about the windmill the women behaved valiantly. It was the women who determined the fate of the campaign. The men of Montrouge were

clearly handicapped. They might have stood up to the men of Montmartre and given blow for blow. What were they to do when they were seized by feminine hands, when feminine arms were thrown around them, when they were pushed and pulled and tumbled in a confusion of feminine bodies? Bellicose as they were, they could only surrender.

Thus ended the memorable Battle of the Windmill that is written in the annals of Montmartre and has been chanted by the Montmartre poets. Montrouge was glad to accept the truce which the Mayor offered. The Mayor had another proposal to make. "Let us," he shouted, "adjourn, victors and vanquished, to the hospitable house of Bouscarat. We will make peace. Since our honour is preserved, we will allow the men of Montrouge to carry off the windmill—we will make them a present of it, after the magnanimous manner of the British when they win wars—on condition that Montrouge makes itself responsible for the payment of the round. After the tourney of arms, the tourney of refreshments! But Montrouge pays."

There was a unanimous cry of approval

from both the belligerent armies, and to Bouscarat they went, reconciled, as antagonists should always be after the heat of a rencounter, in cooling draughts. And there was handshaking and accolades and laughter and song and the pledging of eternal friendship no more to be broken by disputes about windmills. And Tom, although nobody knew a word of English, insisted on singing in his best voice a well-remembered ballad:

In Dublin's fair city
Where girls are so pretty,
'Twas there that I first met sweet Molly Malone!
She wheeled a wheel-barrow
Through streets broad and narrow,
Crying "Cockles and Mussels! alive, alive, oh!"

Alive, alive, oh! Alive, alive, oh!
Crying "Cockles and Mussels! Alive, alive, oh!"

Good-naturedly the Montrougeois and the Montmartrois demanded more. But Arsène

told Tom that he must not impose himself upon the company; he must recollect his character as a journalist.

"But I am not taking sides," protested Tom.

However, it was too late. The Garde-Champêtre had thought of a song of Béranger which had a chorus in which everybody could lustily join:

Combien je regrette
Mon bras si dodu,
Ma jambe bien faite,
Et le temps perdu!

"Well, at any rate, you lost the bet," said Tom.

"Yes, but I had not reckoned on the women. They changed everything."

"They always do," remarked Tom, sententiously. And he then went home to bed in the rue Norvins.

CHAPTER XV

CROWNING THE PRINCE OF THINKERS

IT was on the Place du Tertre that the Banquet to Bibi-la-Bohème was held, and Lisa and Suzy and Paulette, with their amoureux Arsène and Georges and Tom, were present from the earliest hour for the apotheosis of their friend, the Bird-Lover, the Companion of Students, the Thinker of the Luxembourg Gardens. At first, it had been proposed to hold the ceremony at Montparnasse or in the Latin Quarter, but there was no convenient place and, moreover, the reputation of Montmartre was such that its claims to the honour of receiving the Count Abélard Costi de la Brière could not seriously be disputed. The Mayor made a formal démarche to the Committee which met at the Coupole, and it was quickly decided to make the pilgrimage to the Butte.

Paris had already crowned a Prince of

Poets, a Prince of Story-Tellers, and numerous other princes. Paris year after year, crowned a Queen of Beauty in each arrondissement and a Queen of Queens, who from her flowery throne drawn by eight horses graciously smiled on her subjects lining the principal streets and even deigned to visit the President of the Republic in the Elysée. For a Republic there was an abundance of Royalty. But there had hitherto been no Prince of Thinkers. This was a grave default, for was not Paris the Intellectual Capital of the Universe? Surely there was one man worthy of the title! After much cogitation, it was resolved that the Count Abélard—that is to say, Bibi-la-Bohème—was the true pretender to this distinction. Was he not the central figure of the Latin Quarter? Did not his very name recall that of Abélard, who in teaching and discussing Theology at Paris in the Twelfth Century, was the Founder of the University?

Moreover, Bibi-la-Bohème had, in the course of much meditation in the open air, evolved a Theory. His Theory was that Man has descended from the Frog. Every-

body who has the smallest acquaintance with anatomy must have been struck with the physical resemblance of frogs with human beings. Unfortunately, Darwin, following in the footsteps of Lamarck, who had taught spontaneous generation and the transformation of species, was responsible for diverting scientific thought and of inducing the whole world to believe that Man was only a superior Monkey. Why the Monkey rather than the Frog? Was not the Frog shaped like a little man? Had he not heart, lungs, eyes, limbs, like those of a man? Had he not dimensions, affections, senses, passions? If you pricked him, did he not bleed? If you tickled him, did he not laugh? Did not the human embryo pass through precisely the same stages as those through which passes the frog? By dint of protracted pondering on this deep question of the origins of mankind, Count Abélard Costi de la Brière had convinced himself that the savants were on the wrong track. He would have them begin again, persuaded that if they followed his line of reasoning many current notions of evolution would be overthrown. There was

no more reason why the Darwinian branch of the genealogical tree should be followed than the Bibi branch. In season and out of season—if, indeed, there can be seasons for the proclamation of the truth—Bibi had put forward his arguments in favour of the Frog. It must be confessed that he had made little progress. Darwinian ideas were too firmly rooted. He had been laughed at, he had suffered scorn, he had been treated as crazy. Such is the fate of all Thinkers! But at last he was to have his reward. The Committee of the Coupole and the Mayor of Montmartre were taking up a cause which had too long been neglected.

It was a fine day and the Place du Tertre was filled with little tables at which sat those who wished to honour themselves in honouring him who had first expounded the Theory of the Frog. Richard Haveling—Mr. Paname—was there with Henri Roi and Emilie Renaud. He had taken a foremost part in promoting the feast. André Rhobert was present with Fanny Fulger. From time to time one caught a glimpse of the ubiquitous M. Lepic. Professor Pelle, though

deprecating what he regarded as mockery, had been persuaded to come with M. Grosjean. M. de Rotor, with a sense of dignity, had pleaded other engagements; one never knew how far one was committing oneself in attending such functions. But there was a party which tried to hide itself as much as possible in the far corner of the Place du Tertre, composed of M. Hellié, the Minister, M. Rouchon, the Senator, M. Milgraine, the Deputy, besides Lord Appleberry, and Mr. Oscar Kanto. Lord Appleberry had some qualms of conscience, and had expressed them, but they were eventually overcome by curiosity. After all, as a Friend of France, he was entitled—nay, it was his duty—to see all sides of Paris life. Mr. Kanto thought it good fun. As for M. Hellié, he had expressly stipulated that they must remain incognito and no allusion to their presence should be made. The arrangement was perfectly satisfactory. They were to see but not to be seen. They were to hear but not to be heard. I cannot tell you how many other distinguished Parisians and foreigners had thought it worth their while to eat a meal

out of doors. Paris has this advantage over most cities—that it permits its best citizens to wander abroad freely, without dreaming of molesting them, or even of recognising them. Where else in the world could a Minister become a private person without losing caste—that is to say, before he is kicked out of office?

But these were only a handful of the company. For the most part, it consisted of the painters and writers of Montmartre and their womenfolk who had proved their valiance in the Battle for the Windmill; and the painters and writers of Montparnasse, headed by F. Medwin Fall; together with representatives of the Latin Quarter and the Luxembourg Gardens.

The Herald had blown his trumpet in the streets of Montmartre convoking residents to the fête. The Garde-Champêtre had strutted with great majesty over his domain. The Mayor was standing on a bench saluting the guests with enormous sweeps of his battered hat: one would never have believed the human arm was capable of extending itself over such a radius.

The sun lighted up the amphitheatre, was reflected from the knives and forks and shining plates, made the white table-cloth whiter, put more colour into the colour of the women's dresses, concentrated on their bare arms and necks, picked out every leaf of the trees and revealed vividly the scaly red and yellow and grey of the surrounding houses. Above all, it seemed to fall on the veiled statue in the middle of the square. There was great curiosity about this statue covered with a sheet borrowed from the household furnishings of the Mayor.

Bibi-la-Bohème had for the occasion once more changed his attire. He wished to present himself with modesty and had donned a discarded khaki suit drawn from the left-over American army stores. He carried himself elegantly and returned the greeting of the throng with scarcely perceptible inclinations of the head. He was placed on the right hand of the Mayor and surrounded by Committeemen and by Councillors. Mr. Paname, however, remained at some distance from the chief table, for it had been decided that honour should be rendered to Bibi-

la-Bohème from (so to speak) the floor of the house. Oh, what a clattering of cutlery and of crockery, what a bustling of servers, what a hubbub of conversation! The Thinker might be the pretext for the luncheon, but the Eater was the text.

It seemed that the meal would never finish. It went on and on and again on and countenances became congested and tongues were lubricated and loosened and eyes became more expressive than eyes normally are. But all good things must have an end, and at last the Mayor rose, adjusting round his waist a tricolour sash.

"In the archives of our commune, free and independent," he began, "detached as we are from Paris, separated as we are even from the greater France, living on our mountain aloft and aloof from all the clamours of the human hive, there is no record of such a day as this. We have celebrated Art, we have poured libations to Bacchus, we have erected shrines to Venus, we have crowned Joy in its manifold aspects, we have even done Battle; but never before have we admitted Thought into our midst. It is an innovation of which

we need have no fear. It is an experiment which will surely not often be repeated. It would disturb our habits too much. It would provoke a revolution. I would myself probably be one of the first victims of the changed outlook of our citizens. No administrator charged with the conduct of his fellows can afford to render homage too frequently to Thought. That is why the Government with a wisdom which we must respect, thought fit to remove from before the Panthéon, where it stood, the statue of the Thinker moulded by Rodin, and to hide it away in a Museum. The daily sight of it was dangerous. The consequences of putting up in a public thoroughfare such a figure might be disastrous. It would stimulate the most explosive qualities of the masses. The Government was right to remove the Penseur of Rodin. Nevertheless, the Council of Montmartre, after long deliberations and in full accord with the Committee of the Coupole, has decided for the good renown of the Butte to give hospitality to the Ornament of our Age, the exceptional man who has struck out for himself fresh paths through the Forest

of the Intelligence where few venture except along the well-worn roads. I am not myself capable of discussing his Theory, but I utter in your name our esteem for the Theorist. It is to a foreigner that falls the duty of conveying the thanks of the lands beyond our borders—for, contrary to the common belief, there are lands beyond our borders—to the Thinker who has shed new light on our antecedents and has filled in the missing details on the Identity Card of Humanity."

The speech was a tremendous success. But not more a success than the oration of Mr. Paname. Mr. Paname rose. He remarked that the Frog had found its place in Literature. Even Homer had written of the Frog, which proved its venerable ancestry. Who could forget the Frogs of Aristophanes? La Fontaine had made a Hero of the Frog. In our own day Mark Twain, a distinguished American naturalist, owed his fame to his sympathetic treatment of the Frog. For him the chief virtue of the Frog was that it Jumped. Who could refute the assertion of the Count Abélard that it had jumped higher and farther than the Monkey—that it

had jumped to a status which was well represented around those tables? Who would venture after the wealth of arguments which had been elaborated to deny that we were simply Glorified Frogs—Frogs of larger growth but with the same instincts, the same passions, the same purpose in life, as the Frog? There was only a few years ago a general mockery of Darwinism. To-day there was a general acceptance of Darwinism. Then it was considered madness to admit his explanation of our origin. Now it was considered madness to question it. Why this difference of appreciation? How many of his hearers knew, of their own knowledge knew, whether Darwin was right or wrong? Why were we to regard the ignorant beliefs of one generation as more ignorant than the equally ignorant beliefs of a succeeding generation? He would not affirm that Bibi-la-Bohème—as he would affectionately call their friend—was to be regarded as infallible; but he was entitled to a fair hearing and the chances were that he was as correct as other scientists who took hypotheses and elevated them into dogmas. In an Ameri-

can State there had been a great controversy about the practice of teaching children in the schools as irrefutable facts the fables of the savants. Many people objected to scientific doctrines whether they applied to serums and medicine or to evolution, precisely as they objected not long ago to religious doctrines. We were called upon to believe in the plenary inspiration of a new Bible written by Sir John Jenkins and Professor Tomfoodle, just as we had been called upon to believe in the plenary inspiration of the old Bible, presumably written by Isaiah and by St. John. We had discarded one set of so-called superstitions only to be obliged to swallow other superstitions. He said this to clear the ground. They had first to dispose of the Monkey Theory before the Frog Theory could make headway. Mr. William Jennings Bryan had put the case well when he observed: "Asses' milk is the kind of milk that most resembles human milk, but that does not prove that men are asses. Nor does the bestial behaviour of men show that men are beasts or have descended from beasts." Could reasoning farther go? Men had never

succeeded in developing one species from another species. Men had never created life—life which did not exist in some form before. Why should a few persons—a few thousand persons at the most—dictate to them what they should teach their children? But he was wandering too far. He might be supposed to be fulminating against the Frog Theory. No, all he asked was that the Frog Theory should have a fair field with the Monkey Theory, and with the Fundamentalist Theory, and with all the other Theories that sprang out of a modicum of Grey Matter. He stood for Brains, but not for the stuffing of brains.

Then there were other speakers who paid more personal tributes to Bibi-la-Bohème, who dwelt upon his love of birds and his helpfulness to the students, who lauded his originality in a mechanical epoch, who eulogised him as a Thinker. The Mayor solemnly produced a cardboard crown, exquisitely symbolical. It represented water-lilies and on each water-lily sat a frog, his little head upturned to the heavens. The design breathed aspiration; it betokened uplift. To

the sound of much cheering it was placed upon the head of Bibi, who was moved almost to tears. The Mayor embraced him on both cheeks. . . .

Bibi was, indeed, too touched to speak long. Besides, the wine was strong in the sunshine. "I will tell you," he said simply, "how I was led to make these investigations and ratiocinations. It was by reading for the fortieth time the story of the Frog which puffed itself up—striving to become as big as a Bull. And why not? That was the sudden thought which flashed upon me. It is by the inward urge in things that they change. Suppose that was how creation had developed? And gradually, step by step, it was revealed to me that Man had affinities with the Frog. Ah, that imagery of the Swelling Frog had an inner truth of which the Fabulist was unaware. He indicated by intuition what I have tried to demonstrate by reason."

So he went on. But there remained the ceremony of unveiling the statue. The Mayor, with appropriate words, pulled off the sheet, and there was seen on its pedestal a

delightful example of the wit of modern art.

The face was the face of Bibi-la-Bohème, but the body was that of a frog. This was already a delicate compliment to him, but still happier was the fancy of the sculptor in depicting the frog—or Bibi—standing on his hands with his hind legs dangling in the air. This was meant to suggest that the Thinker had turned the foolishness of his predecessors upside down. He saw things from a different angle. The point could not be missed. The sculptor had rightly considered that in a piece of such historic interest subtlety would be misplaced. He had broadened his effects. He had clinched in one bold stroke all the importance of Bibi and had preserved for posterity the attitude in which the Count Abélard stood in relation to his age.

The poets of Montmartre recited their verses specially written for the afternoon. They winged their ephemeral way to the hearts of the audience. As evening fell fireworks were sent up from the Place and far

into the night coloured lights lit up the oriental rotundities of the Church set upon its Hill.

The artists had taken advantage of the opportunity of exhibiting their works. On every railing they were displayed. Many of them were trampled by the crowd, but some of them survived to be brought out again on another day. There were actually a number sold for prices varying from five francs to fifty. Altogether, it was a great day, and Bibi-la-Bohème, the Thinker, had to be carried home to the Latin Quarter in a state of exaltation due to libations and laudations.

CHAPTER XVI

MYLORD L'ARSOUILLE UP TO DATE

WHAT nearly wrecked the Cabaret and for a moment broke the relations of André Rhobert with Mr. Paname, the representative of Henri Roi and Emilie Renaud, was the memorable entrance of Rhobert into the Restaurant Byzantin. It occurred not many days before the advertised date of the opening of the Cabaret. Curiously, the most inadequate accounts were given of the incident in the newspapers, although the purpose of Rhobert was, of course, advertisement. Here is the authentic story of an event which in other days—and in these days, too, had it not been judged expedient to make a partly successful attempt to suppress accounts of the exploit—would have echoed and re-echoed until André Rhobert had become a legendary figure—as legendary as Mylord l'Arsouille.

André Rhobert had, indeed, tried to model his conduct on that of Mylord l'Arsouille. He wanted to create a sensation which had been created in another form by Mylord l'Arsouille in the middle of the last century. Mylord l'Arsouille rode into a fashionable restaurant on horseback. André Rhobert decided to ride into the Restaurant Byzantin in his motor-car. The difference will be appreciated: it is considerable: the difference is one of thirty-nine horse power. Such is the progress of the age.

It arose out of a conversation which Rhobert had with Arsène Le Duc. They were sitting together in the Chinese drawing-room of Rhobert at Passy.

"We must," said the painter, "hit upon some new way of startling the Parisians. My brain positively refuses to give birth to any more ideas. I have exhausted my repertory. What can you suggest?"

Arsène brushed back his long black hair. He stroked his black beard meditatively.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, theatrically striking his forehead, "I begin to feel the pangs of childbirth. It is not yet very clear, but I

suggest we search in the records of an earlier epoch, when Paris life was Paris life, when eccentricities were richer than to-day. We shall surely find inspiration therein."

"What period shall we take?"

"Let us take the period of Louis-Philippe —the period of the dandies. Who stands out most brilliantly? Why! Mylord l'Arsouille."

"Tell me about him."

"Well, let us begin at the beginning. There has been an attempt to confuse Mylord l'Arsouille with Lord Seymour. Lord Seymour was a descendant of an ancient British family. He was a rich young man and a dandy. He possessed the finest wine cellar, the best cigars, the most excellent horses in the world. At least, such was his ambition. But he was eclipsed by Charles Labattut. It was Charles Labattut who was the true Mylord l'Arsouille."

"What has this to do with us?"

"I am coming to that. The masses were confused and attributed the pleasantries of Charles Labattut to Lord Seymour. They fastened the title of Mylord l'Arsouille on

Lord Seymour, but it was Labattut who was the real hero of a thousand exploits of which the public never tired."

"Come to the point. Name some of his eccentricities."

Arsène, who had a remarkable knowledge of certain sides of Paris history, enumerated some of the deeds of the most scandalous person of his time.

"They first began to talk of him when at the ball of the Variétés in 1832 he took the centre of the floor and danced a wilder can-can than had ever been seen."

"Impossible for me to surpass the dancers of to-day. What else?"

"He proceeded to La Courtille with a gorgeous equipage—horns blowing, coaches filled with young bloods, and carried off a dozen *filles du peuple*."

Rhobert shrugged his shoulders. "Impossible! There is nothing in that. There are far too many *filles* who demand nothing better than to be carried off."

"His masquerades in the carnivals were magnificent and all the people cried, 'Vive Mylord l'Arsouille!' "

"Carnival is dead or is dying and cannot be revived."

"He it was who after addressing the crowd from a balcony put gold pieces in a frying-pan and when they were sufficiently heated scattered them on the crowd, which hardly knew whether to be angry because it was burnt or to be glad because it could gather a shower of gold."

"But there is no gold now and one cannot heat paper money."

Arsène thought again. "He entered a fashionable restaurant on horseback to the astonishment of the diners and circulated among the tables. This furnished food for gossip over many days."

"There seems to be something in that," said Rhobert. "We cannot repeat the exploit precisely. Besides, I am a poor horseman. What would be the modern version of the incident?"

"It is obvious," replied Arsène. "The horse has disappeared, but the automobile has replaced it."

"I have it!" cried Rhobert. "Suppose I were to enter the Restaurant Byzantin in

my forty horse-power car, what do you think would be the effect?"

"You would be Mylord l'Arsouille up to date! Vive Mylord l'Arsouille!"

Arsène was enthusiastic. Rhobert was doubtful.

"Assuming that it can be accomplished," he asked, "do you, as a journalist, see possibilities of advertisement in the feat?"

"Possibilities! Possibilities! It would be the story of the year. It would provoke no end of discussion. You would be admired and condemned, you would be praised and abused. Why, it would be the most striking extravagance since the days of the dandies."

"We must think about it," declared Rhobert, pulling his tufts of Chinese whisker. "It could easily be done if the doors were wide open and a space cleared on the floor. No trouble could ensue. But would the manager of the restaurant lend himself to it?"

"But the restaurant would share in the advertisement. Are you in danger of forgetting that this is the age of réclame?"

"O Tempora, O Mores!"

"You should be the last to complain," urged Arsène. "It can be arranged without difficulty. But do you preserve secrecy! If the thing is given away in advance it may be stopped. I shall be there and will, after the event, do everything that is necessary to make it known."

"But I must invite my friends," intimated Rhobert. "We must have the tables filled by the right kind of people. I will simply announce that I reserve a surprise for the company."

So it was fixed. Mr. Paname, for his part, was puzzled by the notice which he received that André Rhobert reserved a surprise for the diners at the Restaurant Byzantin. He arrived in good time and took his seat with some misgiving. What was Rhobert preparing now? He could not guess, but he had a premonition that it was something which might affect him and those to whom he was attached. Nevertheless, he had spoken of it neither to Henri Roi nor to Emilie. He could not imagine that they were directly concerned.

He looked anxiously around the Restaurant Byzantin in the Bois de Boulogne. The Byzantin was gaudily ornamented. The tables were ranged on either side of a board floor which ran straight to the door. Usually this floor was bare and polished for dancing, but to-night a thick carpet was laid down. Slender pillars sprang upwards into arches of filigree work. Dull gold was the prevailing colour, but from the ceiling depended huge red lanterns which cast a coloured glow over the place. They did not give sufficient illumination, but this was supplied by concealed lights which shone through the glass roof and were hidden in the cornices. On the tables, too, were red lanterns. Richard observed numbers of our fashionable friends—the Comtesse Marthe de Montadour, the Marquis de Douilles, and many others. He nodded to Arsène Le Duc, who was opposite to him with Fanny Fulger.

Everybody was on the tiptoe of expectation. The music was playing, but above the music there could be heard speculations about the surprise which André Rhobert was to spring upon them. They admitted that it

was foolish to try to anticipate the intentions of such a delightfully ingenious and elusive creature as André Rhobert, but they could not help making this and that suggestion. It was particularly intriguing to remark that the floor space in the middle was carefully kept clear by the assiduous waiters. Obviously it was there that the surprise would be produced.

Not even Arsène Le Duc was fully aware of Rhobert's plans. They had been developed since the conversation in the Chinese drawing-room. Rhobert had hesitated, but he had finally resolved to make his entry accompanied. Accompanied by whom?

That evening he had presented himself at the Hotel de la Montagne on the Boulevard du Montparnasse. Emilie was astonished to receive his visit. "I apologise," said Rhobert, "for calling upon you without any previous intimation. But this is a pressing affair. There has been organised a dinner-party of my friends and they clamour for your presence. We are only a few days from the great night and it is necessary that you should show yourself among them."

Emilie did not know how to respond. There seemed no good reason why she should decline the invitation. But she would have liked to consult Richard. However, it was too late. She had to make up her mind, then and there, whether she would accept the offer of Rhobert to take her to this party in the Bois de Boulogne.

"You would be unkind to decline," he pressed her. "Why should you? It is not with me that you are dining, but with a whole host of people. Fanny Fulger will be there."

How, indeed, could she decline? But she wished she could tell Richard.

When he obtained her consent, he left her to dress and made a tour of the Quarter in his car. When he returned she was ready.

At the Restaurant Byzantin the dinner was in progress when there was a shout and everybody looked up quickly to see entering by the door a powerful automobile, its headlights glaring. They rose to their feet, they grew excited. This was a surprise indeed! Nobody had been bold enough to suppose that Rhobert would make his appearance at

the steering-wheel of a motor-car. They broke into acclamations, though they were not free from apprehension.

Richard, blinded by the headlights, did not at first see the face of Emilie, but as the car made its way into the room, his amazement at the audacity of Rhobert was turned into wrath. Lying back, pale and alarmed, was Emilie. As the automobile had turned at the door of the restaurant and she realised that she was to be one of the central figures of a sensational entry, she had cried out in protest. She was frightened. The emotion was almost too much for her. It flashed upon her that not only was the feat in itself perilous in the physical sense, but that she was placed in one of those compromising positions she had determined to avoid. She was especially anxious that her name should not be associated with that of Rhobert. It was part of the bargain between them. There might have been no harm in entering the restaurant in an orthodox fashion and to have taken her seat in a miscellaneous assembly at the Byzantin. But to be the heroine of an exploit of which Rho-

bert was the hero was embarrassing to the last degree. He paid not the smallest attention to her cry of distress, intent as he was on the delicate task of steering his heavy vehicle into the room through the narrow portals, between the pillars. Even had he wished to stop, it was now too late. The portals appeared narrower than he had thought, the space between the pillars did not allow for any false movement. His nerves seemed to be giving way. He was not as cool as he should be. He saw the portals dash behind him, and as the pillars approached, he applied the brakes.

If only he had kept his head, all would have been well, but somehow he was confused as the tables and the diners came at him. He did not know what he had done wrong. . . .

There was a terrific crash. One of the ornamental pillars snapped; plaster and stone rained down; a table was overturned with a scattering and shattering of glass and plates; the filigree arch swayed and fell in pieces; white dust and débris covered everything; from all parts screams went up as the

band ceased playing; men shrank back and women fainted; merriment and excitement had been converted into dismay.

Richard rushed forward. The car was aslant in the aisle. Rhobert had been struck on the forehead by a falling piece of plaster and was bleeding. Emilie lay on the cushions, and it was to her that Richard went. He lifted her out of the car tenderly. He gazed at her anxiously. "Are you hurt, Emilie?" he asked. She smiled at him reassuringly. "No, I think not. But, oh, Richard, I would not have had this happen. I should not have consented to come."

"Never mind," he returned. "I am so glad you are all right. I might have guessed Rhobert would be up to some mischief."

"You had better see to him. He seems to be injured."

Richard put Emilie on one of the upholstered benches. The diners were, it appeared, safe. Nobody had been struck except Rhobert. They crowded round while Richard turned his attention to the painter, who was dazed but not seriously harmed. They did not offer to help. Richard took a table nap-

kin, dipped it in an ice pail, and washed Rhobert's forehead.

"It is nothing," he informed Richard, recovering himself—"nothing at all."

"It might have been much—it is already something that you drag Emilie into your scandalous escapades," replied Richard, whose anger revived as Rhobert jumped from the car.

Arsène approached. "It has turned out badly," he observed, "but there is still a first-rate story in it."

"You don't mean to say you are going to write about it?" Rhobert's tone was harsh.

"Surely, that was the agreement. What else am I here for?"

"But, in the circumstances, it is impossible. No, this incident must not get abroad."

"How can I help it?" demanded Arsène.

"Arsène, you will not put this in the papers. I implore you. It will do me more harm than anything that could have happened."

"You should have thought of the consequences first," said Arsène, coldly. "I have a plain duty to perform."

"But it was on your advice I did it. No, Arsène, we must hush the matter up."

"My newspaper will suffer. My own reputation will suffer."

Richard joined his appeal to that of Rhobert. Their interests were identical in this respect. He pointed out that Emilie would be involved in an unsavoury affair which would have been bad enough had there been no accident, and which would certainly arouse the indignation of Parisians were it related in print.

Fanny Fulger, who had not been seen for some minutes, came back into the room. She flung her arms effusively about Rhobert. She cried and was consoled. She added her solicitations to those of the others, begging Arsène not to let the episode leak out. The diners came up one by one with the same request. Arsène was shaken.

"I promise that you shall not lose by your silence," said Rhobert.

"And I, too," added Fanny, with her most effulgent smile.

"Arsène, you must be reasonable!" Richard patted him on the back.

"We must all promise not to talk about the evening's experience," put in the guests.

The manager himself offered inducements to Arsène. "The good fame of the house. . . . You know we make great use of your columns. . . . We propose to make still more use. . . ."

"You must see Grosjean. I don't care. If he agrees . . ." answered Arsène, at last, though with sulky reluctance.

"And now who is going to pay for this damage?" The manager turned with restrained savagery—savagery suppressed under an obsequious exterior—on Rhobert.

"Please don't worry about that. I will pay you."

"If everything else is settled," Richard spoke calmly, "then I have one word to say. Rhobert, you are a cad and a scoundrel. You understand, do you not, that the contract of Emilie is broken. In the meantime, I express my feelings for you thus"—and he struck Rhobert lightly on the cheek.

Rhobert went livid. "You shall account to me for that blow," he shouted, as the

crowd pressed forward. "You shall receive my seconds. I shall compel you to fight."

"As you please," declared Richard, swinging on his heel.

"Come, Emilie," he murmured, "let us leave this place. Let us finish with these unpleasant histories of Rhobert and his Cabaret."

She went with him, not unwillingly.

"Arsène!" sighed Rhobert, dolefully, "we have made a sad mess of our emulation of Mylord l'Arsouille."

"Accidents will happen," replied Arsène. "All the same, let me utter the cry 'Vive Mylord l'Arsouille'!"

"Not on your life!" cried Rhobert, glancing round in alarm.

CHAPTER XVII

HUE AND CRY FOR HENRI ROI

THE duel has fallen into disrepute. Sometimes it was a swashbuckling affair—a species of tolerated assassination. Sometimes it was a farcical affair—a ceremonious encounter in which blood and wounds would have been found shocking. Since the Great War private duelling in Paris, either of the killing or the conventional kind, has been taboo. It was grotesque on the part of André Rhobert to attempt to revive it.

Marie, the old servant, was impressed by the visit to the apartment on the Boulevard Raspail of two men solemnly garbed in black, wearing silk hats. Arsène and Georges, whom André Rhobert had chosen as his seconds, considered it becoming to appear on such a mission in nothing less dignified than frock coats. They preserved a gravity of mien worthy of undertakers.

Richard was still in bed when Marie burst into his room. "Wake up!" She shook him by the shoulders. He opened his eyes. She pulled aside the curtain, letting in a flood of light. "What on earth is the matter?" he asked.

She could hardly speak for agitation. "Two men who are going to a funeral. They want you."

"Am I the person they wish to inter? Am I, by some chance, no longer living? What are their names, Marie?"

"They gave me cards but I have dropped them somewhere. I am so upset. They say it is urgent and they must see you at once."

Feeling as unlike a corpse as a young man engaged to marry the most charming young woman in the world may feel, Richard put on his gayest dressing-gown of red silk with golden flowers embroidered over it, and went to meet Arsène and Georges.

They were sitting on the edge of chairs. Georges was wiping his forehead with his handkerchief and his wreath of hair was decomposed, looking as though it might drop off at any moment. His face was rigidly

set. In one hand he held his silk hat, swinging it in embarrassment between his knees. Arsène was no less aware of the importance of the occasion and was holding his hat by the brim with both hands, staring earnestly into it as though there were a concealed mirror in the crown reflecting back his straight black hair and his fan-shaped beard. They rose nervously at the approach of Richard, Arsène continuing to regard intently the interior of his hat, Georges dangling his hat nervously.

"How touching!" exclaimed Richard. "You see, I am not yet ready for you. Is the hearse downstairs at the door?"

"We come on a painful errand," announced Arsène, in a sepulchral voice.

"So it would seem," returned Richard, cheerfully.

"It is a mission of friendship," explained Georges. "We could not refuse."

"It is exceedingly kind of you and I appreciate the trouble you have taken to prepare yourselves for this interview. But, in the name of all the dogs that bark, to what

do I owe the solemn pleasure of this matutinal visit?"

Arsène told him, falteringly: "You must have anticipated after the events of the Restaurant Byzantin, that the honour of Rhobert could not be satisfied except by a challenge to a duel. He has begged us to act for him."

"That is very thoughtful of Rhobert, but I need not tell you I do not intend to fight."

"But you cannot decline," asserted Arsène. "It is customary after a public insult has been given that two gentlemen should wipe out the stain in combat."

"Indeed!" said Richard, greatly amused. "I thought those follies had disappeared with the war. Is this another of the advertising devices of Rhobert? If so, I am afraid it will end as badly as his lamentable exhibition at the Restaurant Byzantin."

"Doubtless it can be arranged," intimated Arsène. "I would certainly do my best to arrange it. I do not suppose that Robert is more determined to use sword or revolver than you are. But there is a settled form which must be observed. I have every hope

that if you will appoint your seconds, we shall be able to draw up a report that will adjust matters to our mutual advantage."

"That is all we ask," Georges interposed. "As far as I am concerned, I should be delighted if the quarrel could be smoothed over."

"But you must refer us to your representatives," insisted Arsène.

"Gentlemen, I am perfectly capable of representing myself. I hold the duel to be a stupid survival of a day when each man had to take justice into his own hands and in doing so often transformed it into injustice. To-day there are the law courts and the public authorities. At any rate, I am not punctilious on the point of honour. If Rhobert really wants to fight me, I as the challenged party will choose boxing-gloves for weapons. Do you think I am going to run the risk of sticking him on the uncomfortable wet grass at dewy dawn and be obliged to fly from the country? Do you think I am going to run the risk of being stuck myself?"

"There is little danger," protested Arsène.

"Oh, an accident might easily happen to such inexperienced swordsmen as we are. And if it did not, I should have lent myself to a stupid comedy. To the devil with your duels!"

Nevertheless, Richard had reflected on what had passed. In his first flush of anger he had judged Rhobert harshly. He did not like the man, but that was an additional reason for treating him with absolute fairness. Emilie on the way home had sufficiently shown her desire for a reconciliation. "I cannot believe," she had told him, "that he meant to compromise me. It is in his character to perform unusual things which will cause people to talk about him. He is always theatrical. After all, Fanny Fulger was there, and he would have joined her at table. I am convinced that his design was purely professional. No great harm has been done and, for my part, I am inclined to forgive this peccadillo. I will do whatever you say, but it would be a pity to upset the arrangements which have been made at this late hour." Richard had, on the whole, approved her indulgence. It would certainly

be easier to let matters take the course traced out for them. It was Rhobert who was the chief sufferer by the contretemps. Besides, under the terms of the contract it was by no means sure that he was entitled to break the engagement because Rhobert had sought to indulge in a little cheap histrionic display. He had decided that he would be guided by circumstances.

"Tell me," he asked, "what does Rhobert really wish? Does he want to go on with the Cabaret or not? Does he want to retain Emilie or not?"

"I will be quite frank," replied Arsène. "He is hoping that as a result of our consultations with your seconds, an unfortunate incident can be declared closed."

"In that case I will refer you," said Richard, "to Tom Quickly and to Henri Roi. They will look after my interests." He had made up his mind that he would give such instructions to Tom as would clear up the trouble between himself and Rhobert. That is the recognised business of seconds to-day —to frame a procès-verbal which will state both sides to be right.

After sending a note by pneumatic to Tom Quickly in the rue Norvins at Montmartre, he dismissed the episode until déjeûner, when he was to meet Henri Roi and Emilie chez Marguerite. It had become their custom to take many of their meals in this resort of artists. The place pleased them with its mural decorations and its homely aspect. But he waited in vain that day for half an hour and there was no sign either of Emilie or of her uncle. He became impatient and, after drumming with his fingers on the table for what seemed an interminable time, he went out into the street and paced up and down the Boulevard Montparnasse. They were not usually late. Never had they been as late as they were to-day. Doubts that all was not well assailed him. He wandered as far as the Hotel de la Montagne. It was a small smartly-painted place—a toy from some Noah's Ark with its blue façade on which was depicted schematically a mountain of deeper blue with a white crest surmounted by a cloud like a handful of cotton wool. There were miniature palm trees in tubs no either side of the door, looking un-

real as though they, too, had come out of a Noah's Ark. The passage was spick and span. An old woman sat in an office which seemed no more than six feet square. He asked if Emilie was in. The old woman who, with her polished wrinkled face, white ruff and matronly bosom, was like a Rembrandt painting, turned to a board on which were enamel numbers over hooks on which hung keys.

"Her key is there. She has gone out. I remember her going out over an hour ago. She said she was to meet her uncle."

Richard was by now perturbed. He hurried to the Coupole, though it was absurd to imagine that she could be there. He returned abstractedly the salutations of the usual throng on the terrace. He did not know what to do next. He went back to chez Marguerite. Marguerite, beaming broadly, rather dishevelled, as was her wont, could only give him the answer he expected —neither Emilie nor Henri Roi had been seen. "But there is nothing strange in that," she assured him. "Why, people make rendezvous here perpetually and never keep

them. It's better just not to wait but to begin eating."

The advice was doubtless good for the Quarter but it did not apply to the present case. Emilie would not have stayed away unless something serious had occurred. But what? And where was her uncle? Was André Rhobert concerned in this new mystery? That thought haunted him but he tried to dismiss it. It was incredible that Rhobert should seek revenge if Arsène was right in supposing that his desire was to patch up the quarrel. Nor was it conceivable that he could have spirited away Emilie and her uncle at the same time. No, that explanation—which was not an explanation—did not hold water. He lost himself in wild conjecture. . . .

He was hailing a taxi-cab to take him in all haste to the Latin Quarter when he saw Emilie on the Boulevard. At first he felt a sense of relief, but as he remarked her distress, his anxiety was quickened.

"Oh, Richard!" she said, "my uncle has disappeared. I have made every inquiry, but he is not to be found. The concierge

was sure that he had not entered or left the house since yesterday. His hat is in his room. So are his boots. He must have gone out hatless and in his slippers. It is awful —there is not a trace of him."

She spoke breathlessly. "At least you are safe!" said Richard. "I was troubled about you. But come. We will search for him together,"—and he gave the address in the rue de La Harpe to the chauffeur.

It was as Emilie had announced: the green clothes of Henri Quatre were hanging up; the boots of her uncle—the only pair he possessed—were by the bed; his hat was thrown on the wardrobe. Richard called up the concierge, who was willing—more than willing—to repeat her account of Roi's comings and goings.

She set her arms akimbo. "He was a nice gentleman," she began; "always polite, though poor. His habits were a trifling irregular and he was queer—decidedly queer. Sometimes he would not stir out of doors for days; other times he would set off in the evening and come back with the milkman. He liked to dress up—in that very

suit you see there. Well, lately he has been spending hours in the cellar, which has been enlarged and decorated, as you know. It will make a difference to our quiet street to have one of those flaunting cabarets here, and I cannot help thinking everybody who has anything to do with it is mad. A gentleman named Monsieur Rhobert called often. Mademoiselle was frequently here. But yesterday there was nobody. I never left the lodge from morning to night. There was a First Communion next door. We saw the little girl in her long white robes—what a picture she made with her streaming veil, a bride of the church, if ever there was one!—leave with her mother in the morning and I was watching for her return all day. They went perambulating about Paris, for it is something to show off, I tell you; and if I exchanged a few words with my neighbours about it, it was always at the door of my lodge. There wasn't a chance of anybody entering or leaving without my knowing it. And after he returned from lunch yesterday he didn't put his foot outside the door. Nor this morning either. Of that I am positive,

and I will tell it to the police commissary or anyone. . . ."

There was nothing helpful in this rambling statement. But the mystery deepened. If he had not gone out, where was he? When the concierge left Richard and Emilie to pursue such investigations as were possible alone, they resolved to make a minute examination of the contents of the room. In the wardrobe there were a number of paper-wrapped parcels. Richard began to open them. . . .

He gave a cry of astonishment. Emilie came over to look. He had unwrapped a piece of pottery. It was obviously ancient.

"Did you know your uncle had this?" he asked. "It is a most precious relic. I recognize it as belonging to the Gallo-Roman period."

"He has never spoken to me about it," she told him, with round eyes. "Indeed, I am certain that all these packages have not been here long. Only a few days ago I cleaned out his wardrobe and put his property to rights."

"Look, then, at this—and at this—and at

this!" Richard unfolded a Roman medal, and a bronze ornament, and a broken dalle.

"Where can he have obtained them?" questioned Emilie, in wonderment.

"If we could answer that, we should know where he is," answered Richard, as he displayed a golden vase, exceedingly heavy, shapeless, dull.

They sat there—these strange things spread on the bed.

"I do not know much of such objects," commented Richard, "but I have seen similar articles in the museums. They certainly go back to the second or third century. Now, your uncle could not have bought them. They could not have been given him either to hold or to keep. He could not have come by them dishonestly. If we rule out all other hypotheses, therefore, we are left with only one."

"And that is?" demanded Emilie, excitedly.

"And that is that he has found them. He has discovered them. There is, it appears to me, one place in which he could have discovered them."

"Where?" cried Emilie.

"Where but in the cellar? It is from the cellar that we must begin our search. But you had better stay here, or perhaps, better still, go home to your hotel. I will join you as soon as possible."

"But why should I not assist you?"

Richard found it difficult to explain his misgivings. But they were natural enough. It was impossible that Henri Roi should have stayed in the cellar since the previous day unless some accident had happened. He feared vaguely almost any misfortune. But Emilie was not to be persuaded. The more he hinted at the worst that might have befallen, the more resolute she was in accompanying him.

"Put on your cloak, then," he agreed at last, reluctantly. They went down the steps to the cellar, which by the ingenuity of Rhobert had been converted into a magical crypt full of weird emblems, reeking with mystery, suggestive of a dark past; the vaults in which Emilie had practised her dance, with Henri Roi sitting on the throne; the place

which was soon to be the resort of fashionable crowds avid for a new sensation.

It was a long time before Richard found any clue. But as he stepped into the alcove from which he had first seen Emilie, he became aware of an opening which he had not previously observed. It was only a narrow aperture and it was hidden in blackness. It would barely admit the passage of a human body. It seemed to be deep. Richard thrust in his arm and found no end. He looked around for a portable light. On some of the stone tables were ancient lanterns with candles. Although the cabaret was to be lighted by electricity, the lanterns would be lit, too. Again he tried to induce Emilie to remain. "I do not know how far it may go," he said. "I imagine it must be profound, or Henri Roi would not be missing." But again she insisted, and regretfully he allowed her to take her lantern and to hand him a supply of candles wrenched from their sockets, and to follow him as he thrust his body through the narrow aperture.

CHAPTER XVIII

UNDER THE DRUMS AND TRAMPLINGS OF CONQUESTS AND REVOLUTIONS

THEY were swallowed up in the soft moist velvety blackness of a long passage which stretched before them as far as their feeble lanterns shone. The gallery in which they found themselves had broadened out after the first few steps, but it was still not more than two feet wide and they had to walk behind each other. It was low, too: Richard had to bend his head. The walls sweated: great beads of water gathered and rolled in rivulets. The air was fetid: it smelled dankly. The ground on which they went cautiously forward was uneven: they had to look perpetually to their footing. They feared to be precipitated into a pit.

"It is plain," spoke Richard, and his voice awakened sombre echoes which went

darkling down the gallery, "that we are on the right track. As I see it, Henri Roi has lately found the opening into this passage. He has made several expeditions. He has been rewarded by a number of Gallo-Roman relics. Doubtless there are others to be picked up, but that is not our business now."

"Where, then, are we?" It would be too much to say that Emilie betrayed no trepidation; but she had mastered her nerves and her voice shook ever so slightly.

"We are in an unexplored part of the ancient Roman quarries which run under Paris. They are extensive—they are known to stretch from the Jardin des Plantes to the Porte de Versailles, and even to Montrouge, Montsouris, Gentilly. . . . I don't know where besides. Obviously, they are here: it is not to be wondered at; most of their ramifications have been ascertained, but how is it possible to make the map of every tunnel dug by men hundreds and hundreds of years ago? It is probable that we are in a cul-de-sac; that there is not any exit into the known tunnels. In enlarging the cellar the workmen have pierced a hole into the under-

ground quarries without noticing it. But your uncle has come upon it, as we have to-day."

"If we are in a cul-de-sac—if the other outlet is blocked up, as the outlet on our side was blocked up—then my uncle cannot be far off. He cannot have lost himself. What does that mean? It means he must have met with some accident and is lying somewhere in the path."

Richard reflected. "You are right in doubting whether the way is blocked. Perhaps it is not. After all, it would be easy for an aperture, leading into the labyrinth of the quarries, to have escaped attention."

Emilie reasoned with perfect coolness, though she trembled a little: "Of two things one: either we are in a limited area of the quarries, and in that case he must be injured and helpless; or there is a way to the main galleries and he is wandering about confused, and by this time exhausted."

"That is it," agreed Richard. "There were numerous subsidences recorded, and, at one time—it was in the Eighteenth Century, I remember from my reading—engineers

were employed to buttress up the galleries and render them secure. It was then that portions of them were converted into vast charnal-houses. There must have been many subsidences which cut off various parts of the disused mines. We may be in one of them or, as you say, we may be connected with what are now the Catacombs. In any case, I think, Emilie, you should return; there are many reasons. You see it is possible that there has been a fall of earth which has imprisoned Henri Roi; we should then need help to extricate him. It is possible that there is danger of another fall. . . ."

"Certainly, I will not go back for that," declared Emilie, firmly.

"Well, supposing we, too, in our turn, are trapped or lost? Would it not be better for you to give the alarm, if I don't return after a certain delay?"

Emilie was impressed by this argument. But with a boldness that is often in exceptional circumstances more marked in those who might be expected to be weak, she had now set her mind on seeing this adventure

to the end. She did not want to leave Richard if there was truly peril. She wanted to help in the search for her uncle. She was opposed to raising an alarm: there had lately been far too much attention directed on them. Once more Richard had to give way to her and allow her to accompany him on the road, possibly dangerous, he was treading. After some further dispute, he finally surrendered.

"Now, it is settled," said Emilie, "is it not? You will not waste any more time in discussing?"

"You are a brave girl," replied Richard. "Let us push on."

Stumblingly they proceeded. Their lanterns glowing red were of small service. Now and again a big boulder was unseen until they fell over it. The silence was not a negative thing: it was positive and palpable: they heard it. Notions of time, of space, were obliterated: they could not have told whether they had wandered for a few minutes or for hours; they could not have told whether they had traversed a few yards or whether the distance they had covered was

miles long. They were plunged in nothingness. They could just discern about them humid walls, an arched ceiling, a rugose ground; but neither behind them nor in front of them was there the tiniest speck of light, the smallest perceptible landmark. The atmosphere was oppressive, lying heavily, as it seemed to have lain for centuries. For aught they knew, they were surrounded by perils: perhaps they had already taken a turning unawares and were doomed to endless wanderings; perhaps the earth would open at their feet and swallow them up in its cavernous jaws; maybe there would be a sudden rumble and rush of rock before or behind them or over them. . . .

Even in the midst of their preoccupations, Richard tried to recall what he knew of Paris underground. It was not much: he recollected vaguely that after the quarries were abandoned they became the repair of bandits. But what interested him most were the unauthenticated stories of necromancy in these deserted workings. There were legends of strange correspondences between the refuges of the magicians and the Château de

Vauvert, which existed a thousand years ago at the Place Denfert Rochereau—then called d'Enfer. The Château was inhabited between the tenth and the eleventh centuries by the King, Robert le Pieux, excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church, in those days more powerful than the poor secular potentates, for having repudiated his first wife and having married his cousin, Berthe de Bourgogne, whom however, he was obliged to leave. He became an outlaw—a man on whom had fallen the anathema of the Church. After his death, the Château fell in ruins: it was avoided as an accursed place, where there were infernal practices. Richard, pondering over these things, traced a connection between them and the legends of the Latin Quarter regarding the subterranean rendezvous of necromancers.

They came to where two ways met and could not decide whether they should strike to the right or to the left. Eventually, they went, without reason, to the right. It was still dark about them but they could more easily distinguish the shapes of cylindrical

hangings from the roof, which was now considerably higher. To the stalactites of the roof responded the stalagmites of the floor, and walking was still more disagreeable. Moreover, they were now perpetually confronted with a choice of paths, which branched out in all directions. Their quest appeared to them to be hopeless.

"We can be guided only by chance," said Richard. "We have evidently come into the main body of the quarries. There are galleries everywhere. If Henri Roi is indeed to be found in the quarries, there are a thousand opportunities of missing him. The odds are too much. I am afraid we shall be compelled to organize a search-party."

"Let us try further," answered Emilie, who had become eager—more eager than Richard as the difficulties increased and the prospects of success diminished. "We must exhaust every possibility before we appeal to the authorities."

Richard looked at her admiringly. Her face was set and hardened in the dim red glow of the lanterns. From his previous experience of her he had not believed her

capable of such perseverance and such spirit. His own inclination was to confess himself beaten. She stimulated him, encouraged him, urged him on.

She it was who suggested that they must take precautions against being lost themselves. "Whenever we turn," she told him, "we must make a mark." He obeyed her, and with his knife traced an arrow on the calcareous walls at the level of his eyes. They surrendered themselves entirely to the mercy of hazard. They turned capriciously. Their course was dictated by whim. The promenade, as it was prolonged, grew monotonous. There was a sameness about these dark, dismal corridors, of which they could only see a yard or two at a time, that made them wonder whether they were really advancing. To all outward appearances, they were standing still. But they had the recollection of having turned and twisted in their tracks at ten crossroads. Had they really penetrated deeply into the quarries, or were they as in a maze, always going round the same spot?

They were entirely out of their reckoning:

it would have been impossible for them to estimate the number of hours, or the number of miles they had walked: they were both fatigued, but Emilie was apparently less fatigued than Richard when they came marvellingly into the ossuary. Horror was mingled with their surprise, as the walls of stone were replaced with walls of bone. Pillars supported the quarry, and between them were ranged in perfect order the broken skeletons of a thousand years which had been deposited since the French Revolution in this amazing burial place. There were millions and millions of the osseous remains of Parisians—more millions than now inhabited the living city. They were in the Abode of the Dead. It was here that the bodies from the Cimetière des Innocents and other disused graveyards had been transferred. The rows of skulls seemed to shine with a phosphorescent light and grinned ghastlily at these two wanderers who had strayed among them from the living world . . . like Dante, like Ulysses. . . . Richard was perturbed about Henri Roi, he was anxious about Emilie, but yet his mind sub-

consciously traced the history of France as he looked on these innumerable remains of the ages, from the days of the Cæsars, and the invasions of the Barbarians, the Germans, the Visigoths, the Vandals, the Huns, and the Franks. There, thrust without ceremony underground, were the Merovingians and the Carolingians. There were the Normans. The dust of feudal lords was in their nostrils. He thought of the struggles of the dynasties; of the Crusaders and the saintly King Louis; of the Capetian monarchs and the Valois who were involved in the Hundred Years War. He thought of the bloody discord of the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons, the triumph and defeat of Joan of Arc, the curious Louis XI who broke Charles le Téméraire, of François Premier and Charles Quint, of the progress of the Renaissance which was completed under Henri II. Then he remembered were the religious wars, crisis on crisis, blood spilling on blood spilling. The whole soil of France must have been drenched and drenched again: perhaps that was why it was so fertile. . . . There came the Bour-

bon Henri Quatre, in whom they had a special interest, to the throne, re-establishing the royal authority. Yes, Paris was worth a mass; but was it worth hecatombs? . . . Louis XIII; the Thirty Years War. Was War, then, the normal state of existence as some claimed, and peace only a necessary breathing space between two wars? . . . More wars; always wars. Massacres, wars, and social abuses. The edifice collapsing in the Revolution. Then wars once more: the Napoleonic wars after the Terror: Restorations, Revolutions, Republics, Monarchies, Empires. War with Russia, war with Germany: the last Great War which was to end War but which now appeared to carry in its breast new wars, Armageddon and the Final War which would end Civilisation. And he thought, too, of the men and women who had died what were called natural deaths; generation after generation, once as living as the generation of to-day, and now stacked up in dispersed pieces in the Catacombs of Paris. . . .

Let it not be considered strange that he should thus have reconstructed for himself

that long, brave, dismal, bloody history, that pathetic record of poor humanity, always at odds with itself, always fighting for causes which now seemed not worth a pin's purchase, and yet contriving, as it fought, to live and love and get itself shovelled decently underground, until one day the cemeteries were found too full and were emptied into the bowels of the earth where he was now treading softly with Emilie. It is not the most overwhelming private affair which can drive out of one's brain the sad story of mankind when one moves among the multitudinous population of the dead. Those who, like them, had breathed the brisk air in Paris were there ready to crumble at the touch of their warm hands—millions and millions of them—and it would have been strange had he not had this impression of mortality. There were the vague masses and the great men, saints and martyrs burnt in the Place de Grève, the butchers and the butchered, the powerful and the beggars, rotting together, mixed at random, in the hazard of the tomb and the equality of eternity. The façade of craniums was built with

some symmetry, with a macabre design of rendering its appearance agreeable. Where was Philippe Egalité of Orleans? He who had preached égalité was surely in this place, but who could pick out his skull? It was mingled with those of the victims of Saint Barthélemy. Where was Sainte Geneviève? Where Mirabeau? Where Nicolas Flamel? Where Saint Vincent de Paul? And the Cardinal Dubois and the Man in the Iron Mask and Marguerite de Bourgogne and Malherbe and Gassendi and Rabelais and Lulli, and the dear, dead Mademoiselle de La Vallière? Not an old family of France but had its ancestors in this common grave. Their bones had outlasted the living bones of Methuselah, as wrote the author of Hydriotaphia, and had outworn the strong and specious buildings above ground and had quietly rested—though with occasional transportations—under the drums and tramplings of many more than three conquests. . . .

Time, which antiquates antiquities, and even man's destructiveness, had yet spared these minor monuments. . . .

Sometimes Richard and Emilie would shout, and their voices went bounding like a ball down the silent alleys. Not a cry came back to them. They were at last afraid to venture farther. Never would they be able to find their way back to the good light of day if they turned and turned indefinitely. They were prepared to acknowledge the uselessness of their wanderings amid the agglomeration of the osseous deposits of the succeeding centuries in their labyrinthine ranges.

"Shall we try still?" Richard's question tolled lugubriously along.

"Perhaps not," faltered Emilie. "Maybe we could go to the end of this passage, and then . . ."

They took up their weary path, now hardly hoping, ready to turn and seek to discover the road they had come by. There was another gap. They stood irresolute, for it is hard to abandon a quest that has been carried so far. Richard put his hands to his mouth and in a last despairing effort strained his lungs.

"What was that?" cried Emilie, excitedly.

"I heard nothing," answered Richard.

"I am sure there was something," insisted Emilie. "Another shout!"

So they shouted together this time, and then listened as a drowning sailor might listen for a stir of sound over the sea.

"It is scarcely to be heard, but I am persuaded there was a reply," again affirmed Emilie. "Did you hear nothing?"

Richard shook his head. "Was it an echo? Was it fancy, do you think?"

But Emilie was certain, and the third time Richard was half-convinced too. "If there was a call it is in this direction," he said.

Emilie agreed. They ran quickly forward and cried once more. There was now no doubt. The response was faint and far off, but it was unmistakable. They hurried between these pyramids of bones, calling and calling and calling, and the response was clearer and nearer.

"Stay still, wherever you are," recommended Richard, for he was afraid

that in seeking each other they would be confused.

And now they distinguished the words of the unseen voice. "I . . . remain . . . keep calling . . . you."

It was even yet a long business before they reached Henri Roi, but happily, they were buoyed up with the knowledge of ultimate success. They threw aside weariness as a garment. They hastened as though they had only just entered the subterranean passages. And, finally, they found Henri Roi.

He was in a state of exhaustion, but they cheered him and he was enheartened to begin the long homeward journey. Emilie nearly broke down, but she realised that it was supremely necessary to muster her forces. Half-sobbing, half-laughing she helped Henri Roi, who was hysterical, all but demented by his experience. It was a shaken party that guided itself by the interminable rows of yellow bones and the arrows on the corners of the quarry, but it had sufficient strength to crawl to the Cabaret des Alchemistes and up the flights of stairs to the room of Henri Roi. Richard got

Roi to bed, and persuaded Emilie to rest while he went downstairs again to the concierge and induced her to prepare some hot soup for them. He thought of the first meal Emilie and he had eaten in that very room. . . . The concierge was full of curiosity, but they staved off her questions, pleading their tiredness. She, good woman, was disappointed, but she reconciled herself to waiting.

Nor would Richard and Emilie hear of explanations that day. They would keep. They sat holding each other's hands by the bedside of Henri Roi as he fell into slumber.

CHAPTER XIX

IS THIS A FISH TAIL?

IT would be superfluous and indeed grotesque for me to attempt in this book a description of the memorable first night at the Cabaret des Alchimistes, which has already been done with remarkable vigour in a hundred newspapers. My purpose is to relate certain private events in the lives of the persons who have appeared in these pages; and as for the public events, they can be looked up on the newspaper files and in the books of those who make a practice of putting between covers collections of articles or a poor hash of the daily and weekly prints. For my part, I decline to enter into competition with the special writers who have told the world about the talent of Emilie. It will be sufficient if I indicate how they dealt with her. The *New York Times* had a sober but impressive half-col-

umn cable on the front page. George Adam flashed at least a hundred and fifty words to the *Sun* the morning after. The *World* was particularly lively; the text of the Paris message was already long and colourful, but the headlines were longer still and even more colourful. The *Herald Tribune* led the paper with Emilie's triumph. The *Philadelphia Public Ledger* had an excellent mail story. The Chicago, the Baltimore, the Boston, the Detroit newspapers carried contributions from their own correspondents. The Hearst publications had a whole page in their Sunday supplements, profusely illustrated, telling of the queer Cabaret, of Emilie, of the Dance in the Silence, of Rhobert, of Henri Roi, with his mania of posing as an incarnation of Henri Quatre, of Mr. Paname, and the rest: it will be seen what an admirable subject it was. Thanks to the Associated Press and other Syndicates, there was probably not a journal in the United States which did not sing the praises of Emilie.

In England her name became known at once. The *Daily Telegraph* in Paris Day

by Day was rhapsodical and ran the Cabaret and Emilie for four paragraphs; quite against the rules of the paper, for each paragraph should be on a fresh topic. The *Morning Post* was exquisite in the turn of its phrases. The *Times* was not very clear, but in a third of a column of the finest prose. (I may be permitted this appreciation, for I was not its Correspondent in Paris at the time) conveyed to the reader that something new was to be seen in the French capital. The *Daily Chronicle*, in a series of two-line paragraphs signed at the top and at the bottom by Martin H. Donohoe, brought out the essential facts neatly. The *Daily Mail* had an account on (or is it "in"?—I always forget) the leader page of the Dance in the Silence written by The Dance in the Silence Correspondent. The *Daily News* was enthusiastic and saw Brighter Prospects in the event. The *Daily Herald* wound up with a stinging rebuke to the Idle Rich who were the clients of the Cabaret, but it admitted the Birth of an Art. The *Express* did not wait for the night, but beat its rivals by a preliminary scoop the day before. The

Evening Standard was particularly bright. The *Manchester Guardian* was unusually interested. So I might continue, for there were also the Sunday newspapers and the picture newspapers and the illustrated weeklies and, finally, the serious reviews, such as the *New Statesman*, the *Spectator* and the *Nation*, with more highbrow explanations.

In France the same thing happened. Perhaps it was worse. A few sheets, which made a business of being acid, were rather unkind, but, for the most part, they rapturously applauded. After the first shock of seeing her portrait in all degrees of smudginess, Emilie was pleased and began to collect in a scrap-book the countless articles that were devoted to her. But, in the end, the amusement, like the cross-word puzzle and other passing fancies, palled, and she ceased to paste up the eulogies which poured upon her every day.

It was already late in the season: the hot days were beginning and the Grande Semaine was approaching, when the Cabaret opened. In some respects it was a good time for such a novelty: the attention of Paris

was turned towards entertainments, and the write-ups were fuller and freer than they would have been at an earlier date. But, on the other hand, as André Rhobert knew, the Cabaret could not run long before closing for the summer season. On the whole, I think he was right in launching his star on its celestial path when he did. He might have waited for autumn, but in the autumn every theatre would be producing a play about which Comoedia would be expected to give three columns. Emilie might have been crushed out in this clash of theatrical rivalries. As it was, she fulfilled the predictions of Arsène Le Duc, the predictions of the article which he read on the café table of the Chat Qui Fume. . . .

After the adventure of the Catacombs, Richard's anger against Rhobert had subsided. He forgot the incident in the Restaurant Byzantin. There was no more talk of the duel. Tom and Georges and Arsène did, indeed, prepare a procès-verbal, which Henri Roi signed while still lying in bed recovering from his dreadful experience. It spoke of misunderstandings, of explanations

having been offered by both parties and accepted, of honour being satisfied, of the episode being closed. Richard was barely interested, and when André Rhobert presented himself at the apartment on the Boulevard Raspail, Richard hardly remembered at first there had been a dispute. Rhobert appeared to be really penitent and a reconciliation was effected without difficulty.

"I can understand your indignation," said Rhobert, as the two men shook hands, "but you entirely deceived yourself about my intentions. You do not realise how essential a part is fulfilled by the Press in our day. You must permit me as one who knows, to inform you that without the Press we artists —Emilie and myself—would live in obscurity and probably die in misery."

"It is possible," replied Richard, "but I wonder where Art comes in if so much energy and ingenuity must be expended on the advertisement of the Artist."

"There you are right. Art does, of course, suffer. But we must stay in our time. We cannot get out of it. Of what advantage would it be to us to have the commenda-

tions of posterity? In truth, we should not have them. We should not do our work. For to do our work we have need of commendations and a minimum of comfort. There is the dilemma: either we despise fame and daub away discouraged in the dark, producing without zest, without hope, without confidence in ourselves, frittering away our talents in timid essays, sickening experiments; or we start the big drums beating and the trumpets blowing and hypnotise the public and at least produce something, though that something is on a lower level than it would have been had we not sought the appanage of publicity. You see, I am speaking to you quite sincerely. What would you have? Where would Emilie be without these tom-toms? Where should I be without this tintinabulation? I should be mooning my days away at the Coupole and starving."

"At least," objected Richard, "you will agree it is distasteful?"

"Distasteful, my dear fellow? The whole structure of modern society is distasteful. But who are you and I to reform it?

We must accept the conditions as we find them. When people tell you, as they will, especially the envious failures, the mournful ratés, the artists manqués, that I am a charlatan, you may assume that they are nine parts right. I cannot help it. But if I can keep that tenth part, I can console myself and acquit myself before the bar of my conscience. I do keep that tenth part intact, and when the dross of to-day has disappeared, there will, I believe, remain something for to-morrow."

"I did not know," returned Richard, "that you had such a clear view of your situation."

"Do you think I do not feel any bitterness? Do you think I am altogether a popinjay? You are aware of my beginnings. Who took any notice of me when I was completely sincere and striving to give of my best? It was only because I learnt in time to pander to the public taste that I survived those wretched days. I was compelled by circumstances to make game of those who would otherwise have made game of me. But I keep bright and unblurred what I believe to be my real gift. Some day you must

come to look at pictures which I rarely show anybody. I dare not display them yet. I am still paying the price for being allowed to paint them. Some day I will bring them out: probably they will be accepted: they will accept anything from me soon. But if they do not it will be a matter of indifference to me."

As they were talking they heard Tom Quickly's cheery voice on the stairs:

At Newry Town I was bred and born,
In Newgate jail I die with scorn,
I started life at the tinker's trade,
But I always was a roving blade.

He rushed into the room, pushing aside the protesting Marie. When he saw the two men together he stopped. He looked at them, inquiringly, but was instantly reassured. "I was coming," he said, "to prepare you for Rhobert's visit. But it seems you are already friends again. That is as it should be. There is no room for quarrels in our little lives."

"I want to add," Rhobert said, "in case you have been influenced in your opinion of

me by jealous feelings in respect of Emilie, I have a piece of news which may dispel them. So much the better that Tom is here. He, too, shall hear it. Advertisement again!" Rhobert smiled. . . . "Well, Fanny and I have decided to get married. But it shall be a quiet wedding. It shall be just before the Cabaret closes, and we shall leave town after the Fourteenth of July."

"My hearty felicitations! Emilie and I intend to imitate your example. Our plans are precisely the same."

"This is contagious!" declared Tom. "I, too, am going to settle down with Paulette, and I believe we shall shame Georges into following suit with Suzy and Arsène with Lisa."

He began to caper round the room, indulging in a snatch of song, for his repertory was inexhaustible:

Only say that you'll be Mrs. Flannigan;
Don't say nay, charming Judy Hannigan.

"One thing more," Rhobert remarked after they had exchanged congratulations. "I have not the slightest doubt of the terrific

success of Emilie. She will have but a short run, but it will be sufficient to establish her firmly. Now you are certain to have innumerable offers from the big impresarios for the autumn. I will not stand in her way. You are free to accept them and to make the best possible terms. But I should like you to consent to her appearing at the reopening of the Cabaret for, say, a month in the autumn. That will give it a fresh kick-off. Afterwards, I propose to get Fanny Fulger to appear, and there should be no difficulty in keeping the show going as long as I am interested in it. Emilie can then fly off to larger scenes and to bigger triumphs."

For response, Richard held out his hand again, and they shook hands warmly.

But there was a few days' delay, for Henri Roi did not recover from the shock of the Catacombs as quickly as was expected. Richard spent much time with him improving his knowledge of Henri Quatre: his thesis had been accepted at the Sorbonne, and the day when he must defend it orally before Professor Pelle and others was ap-

proaching. Henri Roi was impressed by his intimate acquaintance with the epoch, and did not doubt he would come out of the ordeal with flying colours. After all, it was comparatively rare for a foreign student to obtain the Doctorate. But no better professor to coach him could have been found.

At last the evening to which Tout Paris was looking, arrived, and, as the records of the newspapers to which I have already referred attest, the audience comprised more distinguished persons than had ever before been crowded into so small a place. The ordinary entertainers were much liked: the programme had been prepared with skill. But it was Emilie Renaud who carried off the honours. Her name ran throughout the world.

It had been arranged that she should receive the next day in the apartments of Richard. Her own room at the Hotel de la Montange was impossible. She and Henri Roi were there at an early hour in the morning. But they were not too early. Immediately the visitors arrived in a steady stream which hardly ceased until nightfall.

M. de Rotor left his card with a kindly word written upon it. Lord Appleberry came in person. "As a Friend of France," he began, removing his eyeglass, "I am happy to present my homage to you who are destined to carry French culture into many lands, including, I trust, my own, where we shall be pleased to welcome you." He withdrew with exceptional dignity.

Mr. Oscar Kanto, broad shouldered, heavy jowled, was equally terse. "I have but one word to say," he observed. "If only the peoples could learn more of each other, they would know each other better. What better medium of understanding than a common art? I do not despair of my country returning to Europe if you would deign to become an unofficial Ambassadrice—as I may claim to be an unofficial Ambassador —to America."

Nor was M. Hellié missing. He came to bear his tribute to the rising star. He spoke of the constellations which had already appeared in the artistic firmament of France, and rejoiced that an astræa brighter than them all was now shining like a beacon light.

And then there was M. Milgraine, the Deputy, and M. Rouchon, the poetic Senator, testifying to the poetry of her movements, and the Comtesse Marthe de Montadour and the Marquis de Douilles and F. Medwin Fall and Dollard and M. Grosjean as witty as ever. And there was the sad-eyed Dean and Professor Pelle and the sharp-faced, eager M. Lepic. And the Count Abélard Costi de la Brière—Bibi-la-Bohème—the Prince of Thinkers—paid his respects. And Rhobert had told Aristide the Goatherd to call on Richard and Emilie and Henri Roi. He consented to play a little tune on his pipe and Richard heartily thanked him, remembering the dawn on the Pont-Neuf.

"I have a piece of news for you," he said, nervously fingering his béret. "I am to be married to the Flower Woman of Les Halles."

Richard resolved to send them a handsome present, for he felt that he owed much to Aristide the Goatherd and the Flower Woman of Les Halles. Did he not owe Emilie to them?

And there was Pierrot and Harlequin and Colombine of the Odéon, whom they had seen in their Lesson of Love in a Park. And there was the Mayor of Montmartre in his battered tall hat and there was the Herald who blew a blast outside their windows, and there was the Garde-Champêtre with his long staff, and there was a delegation of the Councillors. There were the Men of Montrouge, the heroes of the Battle of the Windmill. The concierge of the rue de La Harpe peeped apologetically in. Even Marguerite snatched a moment from her multiple duties. There was the manager of the Restaurant Byzantin. There were, as Rhobert had predicted, impresarios willing to offer any terms. There were Lisa and Arsène and Georges and Suzy and Tom and Paulette. In short, there never was such commotion, such coming and going, on the stairs of the apartment of the Boulevard Raspail. It inspired Tom to sing what he described as a new song, though it was really a very old song, when for a moment the room was left relatively free:

Sich a gittin' upstairs
And a-playin' on de fiddle,
Sich a gittin' upstairs
I nebba did see. . . .

Dar come Miss Rose in her missus's clothes
An' how she got dem nobody knows;
But dar she was dressed so neat
Dancing Taglione at de corner ob de street. . . .

Sich a gittin' upstairs
And a-playin' on de fiddle,
Sich a gittin' upstairs
I nebba did see. . . .

And there was the reading of the eulogiums in the newspapers. Arsène's article seemed to have been broken off short—probably owing to the exigencies of a distracted make-up man in the sub-editorial room late at night.

"Why it ends in a queue de poisson!" chaffed Tom.

"Queue de poisson—fish's tail!" cried Arsène indignantly. "You do not know what

the phrase means. A fish's tail certainly goes tapering away from the middle, but think how it afterwards expands in a beautiful fan!"

"That is true: the fish has been the most maligned of creatures in the jargon of French journalists," asserted Tom.

CHAPTER XX

QUATORZE JUILLET

THEY were dancing at the corner of every street. They began dancing in the early evening. They danced until the dawn. They danced as long as the musicians could fiddle and blow, as long as their legs could respond to the rhythm of the music. The whole city was dancing, and not only the city, but the country. In every remote part of France there were festivities. Nearly a hundred and fifty years ago the Bastille had fallen—the most tremendous event in its revolutionary significance in modern history. The date of July Fourteenth should be remembered in all Europe, in America, too, for it is not a French happening, but a universal happening which is commemorated on that date. It is an anniversary which separates the old from the modern world. It is the beginning of free-

doms, the starting-point of new ideas, the commencement of individualism and industrialism. That one cannot altogether rejoice at the course of things may be true: humanity has not made the best of its enfranchisement; it has blundered like a boy suddenly released from paternal restraints. But if liberty has not yet brought greater happiness, if machinery has not brought greater leisure, if science and invention have been sometimes diverted to purposes of destruction, it yet remains indisputable that the world was given its chance, which it is beginning to turn to advantage, on the day that the Bastille was broken. For us, men of the Twentieth Century, there is no anniversary which calls more imperiously for celebrations than Quatorze Juillet.

It is in Paris that celebrations are most joyous. Nobody knows how to give himself up to merriment like your Parisian. That was why Richard (Mr. Paname) and Emilie Renaud, who had achieved bonheur, decided to stay in Paris and to participate in the fête. They had, as arranged, married, and by good fortune the opportunity fell to Richard

of obtaining larger apartments in the house on the Boulevard Raspail so that the cat-like Marie might remain with them. André Rhobert and Fanny Fulger, both well pleased, wedded almost at the same moment as Richard and Emilie, accompanied them as they promenaded Paris, looking on at the jubilations. In the morning they had trooped out with the dense crowds to Longchamp, taking pleasure in the procession which wended its way to the huge arena on foot, in carts, in cabs, in automobiles. They had seen the picknickers on the grass. They had witnessed the parade of the troops. They had cheered the President. They had dined on the Grands Boulevards while the endless panorama of laughing Parisians went by. As the dusk fell they had lingered at countless street corners. In every open space and in many spaces which hardly deserved the name of open spaces, bandstands, brightly decorated with flags and paper flowers and streamers, had been erected by the authorities. The bands were playing and the people were dancing. They were dancing under the coloured lights of Chinese lanterns festooned

from tree to tree. They took their dancing gleefully. Traffic had been stopped for them. Every midinette and every errand boy was dancing. The workers, old and young, were dancing. The bourgeois of every condition were dancing. The Chinese lanterns, casting strange shadows as they swayed, were dancing. Nowhere was there horse-play or disorder. Everything was convenable though so cheerful.

The cafés from the Grands Boulevards to the Latin Quarter, as they made their way over the river, were lit up far into the night. Outside them were tens of thousands of little tables and chairs extending across the pavement and sometimes right into the road. There the dancers reposed, consuming coloured sirops and relatively innocuous drinks which affected neither their heads nor their heels. Paris is always an out-of-doors city, but never is it such an out-of-doors city as on Quatorze Juillet. Parts of Paris give it the reputation of being a nocturnal city, but it is truly a nocturnal city only on these nights around Quatorze Juillet. The buildings, public and private, were decorated with

bunting and illuminated. By the Hotel de Ville there was the biggest of the balls and the immense façade, picked out with thousands of lamps, made a wonderful scene which justified the description of Paris as the Ville Lumière. On the bridges and quays of the river, fireworks were sent up, bursting in the clouds into myriads of falling stars, red and white and green and gold; and the huge masses of people cheered each fountain of fire excitedly and delightfully. One could see far off the Church on the Hill, the Sacré-Coeur dominating Paris, aglow with bonfires, multi-coloured and intermittent. You could have gone anywhere from the extreme north to the extreme south, from the farthest point west to the farthest point east, and you would never have got out of earshot of the music, and would never have failed to observe the dancing throngs in the squares and the open roads. Over you would have exploded the countless rockets like seed-pods sending down their bright rain. They had their private pleasure, these four, but the public pleasure enhanced it: they felt they

were a joyous part of a joyous world moving in an atmosphere of joy.

But inside such buildings as the Bal Bullier, famous for many generations of students, there was dancing too. The Bal Bullier, standing in the Avenue de l'Observatoire near the Boulevard de Port-Royal, was full of memories of the past when youth was youth. Is youth no longer youth? Perhaps it is not in some cities, in some lands, but it is always youth in Paris. Let the melancholy-minded regret other epochs; Bullier is still Bullier, and the youth of all ages feels its youth in the edifice of Ottoman appearance under the electric colonnades. Students and shop-servers and neatly-dressed employés and clerks from offices and artists and chambermaids and grisettes and femmes du monde—or, at least, having the air of femmes du monde—commingled, for rank does not count on these occasions, and every class encounters every other class, rubbing shoulders and jostling each other in anatomical and social confusion. The poorest seamstress contrives in these days to wear silk stockings and to make for herself a décolleté

robe. The spectacle is a little more luxurious than it was—feathered hats, embroidered dresses, satins and rich stuffs. But Bullier is still bon enfant, without pretension, without formality. Mimi Pinson is transformed, but she is still Mimi Pinson. The heroes and heroines of Murger, who has been decried lately as furnishing a false picture, are veritably alive, though they have changed in their externals. Du Maurier would have found himself, after a first fleeting surprise at minor differences, perfectly at home. The shimmy has been substituted for the polka, but it is the spirit in which the polka or the shimmy is danced which matters. Two bands took up their tasks in turn. When the older-fashioned orchestra stopped, the jazz-band began, and the great floor was perpetually in motion. Around in the alcoves sat the onlookers, including Emilie and Richard, Fanny and Rhobert, until Richard proposed that they should dance, too. They danced with a will, changing partners from time to time. In the garden were luminous grottoes, and it was there that they found Tom and Georges and Arsène with Lisa and Suzy and

Paulette. Tom was teaching them another song about a little wicked blue-tail fly:

The fly unto the fish did say
As on the pool it floating lay,
If you can catch my tail, you may!
Tra la la la la li,
Tra la la la lay!
If you can catch my tail, you may!
Tra la la la la li,
Tra la la la lay!

They were all exceedingly merry and they returned to dance in the great hall. Frequently they exchanged greetings with acquaintances, for they were in this quarter well known. But although the whole ballroom had heard of the fame of André Rhobert and the more recent fame of Emilie Renaud, and recognised them, they were not in the least embarrassed. Glances were constantly cast at them, but they were discreet glances; every member of the assembly was absorbed in his or her own happiness. The dancers looked also at Mr. Paname and at Fanny Fulger and pointed them out to each other. But chiefly they were intent on their

own steps. It would have seemed that Paris had no cares, that there was no death, no sickness, no sorrow in the city on the Seine. For this day and night, at least, Paris was happy. It was a happiness perhaps unique in its completeness and in its wide diffusion. When Paris gives itself up to joy, it is joy indeed.

But all things have an end, and the night was danced down and the dawn—a warmer dawn than the dawn not long before on the Pont-Neuf—came upon them out of the sky under the acacias of the Boulevard Montparnasse, where the habitués of the Coupole were dancing and conversing on the terrace extending into the street. It was time to go home. As they took leave of Rhobert and Fanny at the corner of the Boulevard Raspail, Richard, in the manner of Tom Quickly, remembered an old song of the days of Henri Quatre.

"What a city!" he exclaimed. "Paris is worth almost anything. But there is one thing it is not worth."

"What is it not worth?" asked Emilie, well knowing the answer.

"Listen," said Richard, and he sang softly

Si le Roi m'avait donné
Paris sa grand' ville
Et qu'il me fallut quitter
L'amour de ma mie
Je dirais au roi Henri:
Reprenez votre Paris
J'aime mieux ma mie, au gué,
J'aime mieux ma mie!

THE END

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